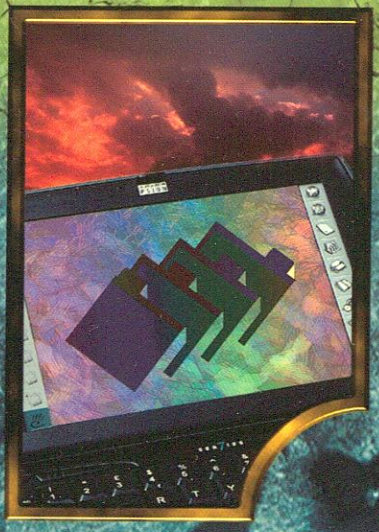
# Palmtop

The journal for Psion computers and compatibles

Issue 28



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# Palmtop

**The journal for Psion computers and compatibles**

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*Palmtop* is available by subscription only from the address given above, price £24 within the UK, £27 in Europe and £33 worldwide. Price covers 6 issues and all postage (and airmail costs for European/worldwide subscriptions). VAT is not payable on *Palmtop*.

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# EDITORIAL

**Rumour has it that the Psion Revo is outselling the 5mx—by a considerable margin, in fact. Perhaps you're wondering why?**

If I *knew* the answer to that question I'd probably be working in marketing rather than publishing, but I can make a few guesses. First off, handheld computing is now leaving the 'techie' phase to become more widely adopted by 'casual' users, or at least those without a specific interest in computing for its own sake. As palmtop computers become more of a commodity, different purchasing factors begin to take over, with people selecting a handheld device on factors such as styling and the colour of the casing. Palmtops are becoming a *fashion* accessory.

In the parallel world of mobile telephones a similar thing has happened: people are now buying them because they like the colour. The Revo is undoubtedly the most stylish Psion creation to date and is clearly aimed to attract such style-conscious consumers.

Aesthetics aside, the Revo also appeals to another lure of the commodity market—simplicity. Imagine a novice user examining the box: the thing comes with a built-in battery, built-in storage (i.e. no CompactFlash disks to buy or understand), all the software you need is already installed and the mains cable/recharger and docking station are right in the box. Even the instruction manual is relatively slim ("So it *must* be easy to use") and there's no mention of 'programming' anywhere ("If I had to *program* the thing then I'd never figure out how to use it"). The Revo is packaged as a straightforward, easy-to-use tool to organise your life.

The truth is double-edged. On one hand the Revo is a wolf in sheep's clothing: an extremely powerful package that appears simple. On the other, *all* EPOC machines are almost equally straightforward, if only people knew. At least the image of the Revo is persuading healthy numbers of new users into the world of EPOC computing, and that's good for all of us.

*Steve Clack - April 2000*


## Palmtop is...

Steve Clack - Publishing Editor

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Christian Hayle - Artwork & Design

Tracy Braham - Subscriptions

Steve Litchfield - Sub-Editor

Pete Sipple - Technical Contributor

John Woodthorpe - Senior Contributor

Nigel Wright - Senior Contributor

**Thanks...** to all the other contributors whose names appear within *Palmtop* and those who have kindly supplied products for evaluation.

Series 5 cartoons - Carl Reader

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# NEWSREEL

*What's new in the world of EPOC*

## Psion Internet coming...

Psion Internet has been created to develop an advanced ISP and portal service centred around a wireless personal information manager for mobile professionals, to be launched in the second half of this year. The service will be promoted with Psion's products to provide users with "a full mobile Internet experience out of the box".

Psion Internet *www.psioninternet.com*

## PsiWin Y2K fix

In response to problems converting dBase files from PC to palmtop since January 1st 2000, Psion have released a free patch for PsiWin 2.1 and above. The filename is dBUpdate.zip.

*www.psion.com/downloads*

## Psion does WAP (again)

Psion Computers is about to deliver WAP browsing capabilities to its range of handheld computers. Using an imminent WAP (Wireless Application Protocol) browser, users will be able to access a range of WAP services, including key data on company intranets and personal data such as stock portfolios, cinema bookings, news headlines and sports results.

*www.psion.com*

## Psion team up with Amazon

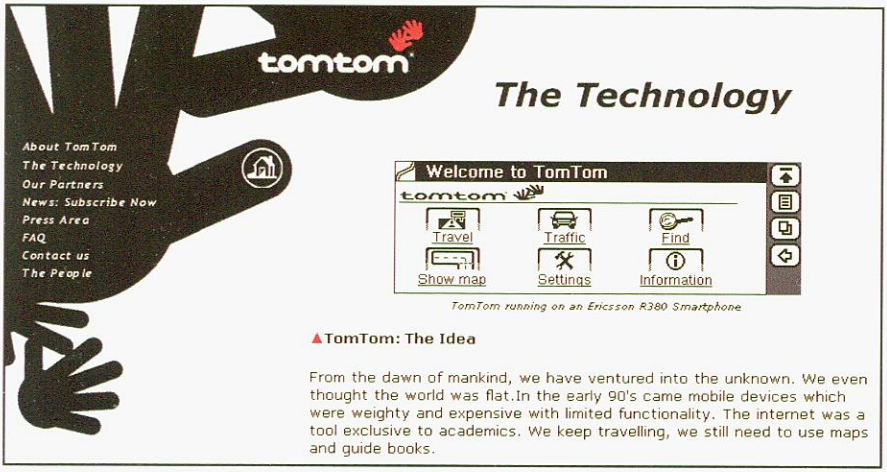
Psion Inc. (in the USA) have arranged for leading online retailer Amazon.com to sell the Revo handheld computer to Amazon's 17 million customers, proving Psion's commitment to making its products available to a wider audience in North America. The infrared 56k Travel Modem is also being made available on Amazon.com .

*www.amazon.com*
*www.psion.com/revo*

## Tom Tom

To meet the increasing demand for WAP services, Palmtop Software and Ericsson have unveiled a new range of services that will enable mobile access to local maps and pinpoint routes to selected destinations. Location Based Information Services will be available via operators and service providers on WAP phones as well as other devices supporting such standards as HTML or WML. This is all built on Palmtop Software's sophisticated map compression and routing information technology, providing map images directly onto the terminal display.

With the Ericsson solution, mobile network operators can offer users route descriptions and the ability to search their immediate location for the nearest attractions. Users can choose from a variety of service categories including restaurants and shopping centres,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▲TomTom: The Idea
From the dawn of mankind, we have ventured into the unknown. We even thought the world was flat.In the early 90's came mobile devices which were weighty and expensive with limited functionality. The internet was a tool exclusive to academics. We keep travelling, we still need to use maps and guide books.

cinemas, public transport, hairdressers and many others.

In searching for a local restaurant, for example, users can organise their search findings in order of proximity, select their preference and then request a description of the route in text or graphical form. Presented graphically, the chosen route is highlighted on a map showing the local geography of the area. Users can request the quickest possible routes for either walking or driving, even taking one-way streets into consideration.

*www.tomtom.com*

## Sports calendar launched

On Board Info, best known for their Economist eCalendar Companion (see page 23 for a full review), has launched the Sporting Life eCalendar Companion, in partnership with sportinglife.com. As with its sister product, the Sporting Life eCalendar Companion personalises your electronic calendar on desktop or handheld with essential sporting fixtures, results and statistics.

A free Internet update service will keep your calendar up-to-date with new and amended fixtures, plus up-to-the-minute results and statistics for the real enthusiast.

*www.onboardinfo.com*

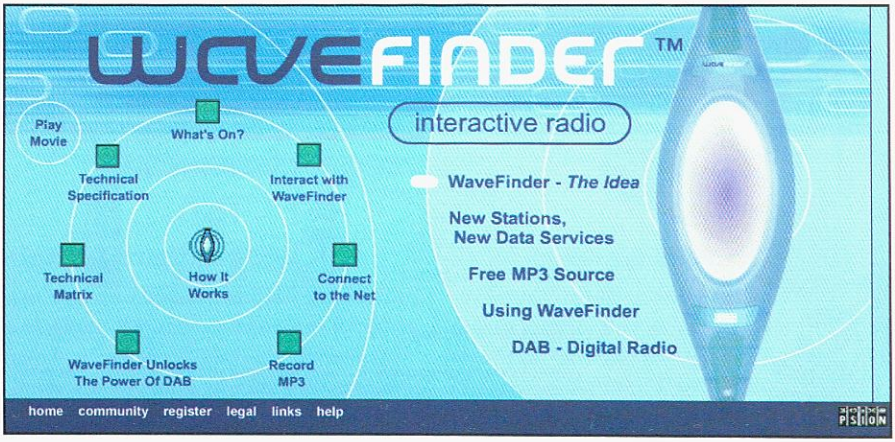
## Free Route Planner

Palmtop Software have announced that while stocks last, purchasers of their GPS receiver (see review in issue 26) will receive Route Planner Millennium free of charge.

*www.palmtop.nl/routegps.html*

## Lotus Notes goes mobile

Lotus Notes users can now take their email with them wherever they go, using an ER5 palmtop (e.g. Psion Series 5mx, Revo or Series 7) with Insync Pro (e). This is a synchronization solution for Lotus Notes Mail, Calendar and Address book, and works with Lotus Notes 4.5/4.6 and 5.0.




Psion now also offer synchronization with Lotus Organizer 5.0 and 6.0 users through a free PsiWin 2.3 plug-in.

*www.psion.com*

## Wavefinder

The first Psion InfoMedia product, Wavefinder, was previewed at CeBIT in March. This will "unlock the true potential of digital audio broadcast transmissions already broadcasting over Europe and will support the efforts of the BBC, Digital One and other European broadcasters to promote exciting new content through the medium of digital radio".

*www.wavefinder.com*

## Inso partner program

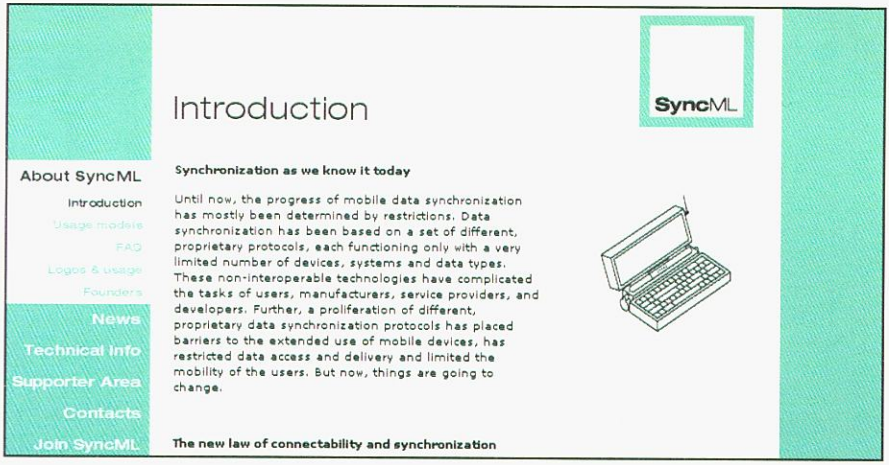
Information Exchange, a division of Inso Corporation, have announced the launch of their Symbian Platform Partners Program, to introduce file and document access to next generation wireless information devices. Inso plans to release a product later this year which will allow manufacturers of Symbian-based Smartphones and Communicators to display the contents of many standard office documents directly on the mobile device, making it easy for users to get access to email attachments and corporate network information from anywhere.

*www.ie.inso.com*

## EPOC gets Jot

Symbian has signed an evaluation license with CIC, for their 'Jot' handwriting recognition software. Jot has been integrated at the EPOC operating system level, enabling it to be used in most applications The licensing agreement between the companies will allow Symbian to provide a version of Jot as part of the standard Symbian Software Development Kits (SDK) available through the Symbian Developer Network. By making Jot available in the SDK, hardware OEMs and developers may then evaluate it for incorporation into their devices and applications.

*www.symbiandevnet.com*
*www.cic.com*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Synchronization as we know it today
Until now, the progress of mobile data synchronization has mostly been determined by restrictions. Data synchronization has been based on a set of different, proprietary protocols, each functioning only with a very limited number of devices, systems and data types. These non-interoperable technologies have complicated the tasks of users, manufacturers, service providers, and developers. Further, a proliferation of different, proprietary data synchronization protocols has placed barriers to the extended use of mobile devices, has restricted data access and delivery and limited the mobility of the users. But now, things are going to change.
The new law of connectability and synchronization

## Wireless portal

BrainDock.com have launched an online portal providing information and services for wireless device users and WAP mobile phones. When launched in May, BrainDock.net will provide news, weather, sports scores, flight information, yellow and white pages, restaurant menus and US driving instructions, as well as package tracking at Federal Express, UPS and Airborne. Intelligent 'push' features such as stock price trigger alerts will be included in the service as will on-the-spot price referencing for comparison-shopping.

*www.braindock.com*

## SyncML founded

Psion, IBM, Lotus, Motorola, Nokia, Palm and Starfish Software have announced that they have founded the 'SyncML Initiative'. This develops and promotes an open industry specification for universal data synchronization of remote data and personal information across multiple networks, platforms and devices.

Data synchronization is currently based on many different protocols, each one functioning with a limited number of data types, devices or systems. The SyncML Initiative will deliver an open industry specification which will enable a new generation of universal interoperability between systems and devices. Personal and enterprise information, including email, calendars, to-do lists, contact information and other critical data, will be accessible and up-to-date regardless of where the information is stored, giving users more flexibility.

*www.syncml.org*

## Multi-user gaming with Psion

Psion and Intuwave, a developer of innovative wireless data services and applications, have showcased the first multi-user gaming content for next-generation Wireless Information Devices. The demonstration showed both classic board and trivia games built on Intuwave's Wireless Collaboration Server platform, running on Psion devices and WAP phones participating in the same multi-user game over wireless networks.

CeBIT REPORT

# CeBIT 2000

## 24th Feb - Ist March Hannover, Germany

The promoter of the world's largest computer and IT show reached another record this year. With 7,802 exhibitors (last year: 7,412) and over 750,000 visitors (last year: 698,000) this year's CeBIT was a great success.

## Psion and Motorola to build Quartz devices

In the last issue we reported that Psion and Motorola had signed an agreement to develop new devices with integrated voice and data capabilities. These will now be based on Symbian's 'Quartz' reference design. On show were several previews of these new devices, One looking like a small Revo or (Nokia) Communicator, others being keyboard-less with quarter-VGA displays, showing similarities to a Palm organiser. One even had no display at all, being intended to work with voice capabilities only. The first devices from the Psion/Motorola alliance are due to be available sometime next year.

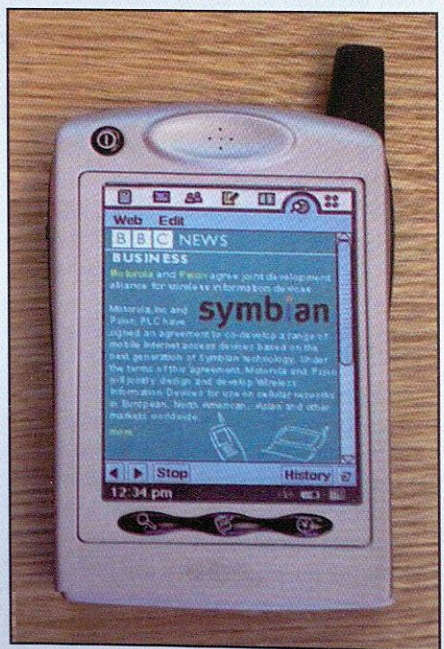
## Symbian unveils integrated wireless computing platform

Throughout the show, Symbian and partners concentrated on promoting the Quartz reference design, already shown to programmers at the Symbian Developer Conference in Santa Clara, USA. Ericsson had already demonstrated a multimedia application on an early Quartz prototype in Geneva, in October last year.

The EPOC operating system already has rich functionality, is written fully in native C++ code and makes use of Object Orientated programming techniques. Together with Philips, Symbian tried replacing the Eikon GUI (Graphical User Interface) as used on the Revo, Series 5, etc. a few years ago, building a new one for the ill-fated Ilium Accent smartphone. During this project Symbian realised that developing a new GUI is possible, but also very costly and risky.

Early in 1999 Symbian announced a new strategy of supporting only four 'reference' designs, thus making it easier for licensees to get their EPOC devices on the market in a shorter timescale, and leaving Symbian with fewer variants to keep track of.

The Quartz design supports a tablet-like form factor with a 320 x 240 pixel 'portrait' colour screen. With the absence of a keyboard,



handwriting recognition is necessarily built in, possibly using the Jot software which is already successful on other platforms (see page 6). All Quartz devices will include at least: Contacts, Jotter, Agenda, Email, fax, SMS/telephony, Web/WAP browsing, Bluetooth and Java integration. All applications will be fully redesigned and optimised to be viewed from a quarter-VGA screen in a mobile environment, allowing licensees to create true Wireless Information Devices.

As with Psion and Motorola, Symbian also had no working Quartz products on show, just a few plastic cases to indicate the planned size of the new devices. Symbian used their latest emulator, which will be sent out to programmers in the second or third quarter this year to demonstrate the new Quartz GUI.

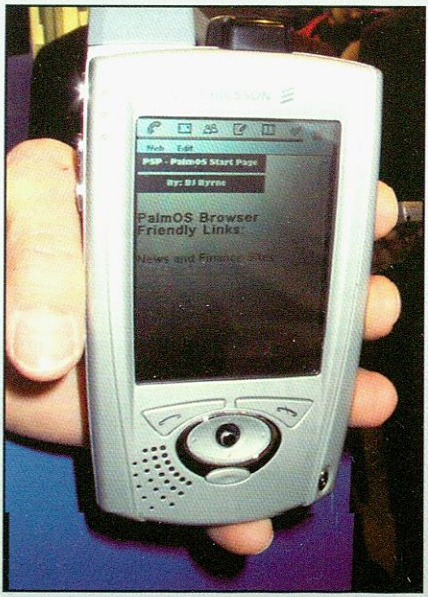
Symbian also demonstrated a lot of their existing Series 7 and netBook devices at the show, plus Ericsson's R380 smartphones that will be available to buy this summer.

Symbian also showed (together with their EPOC licensees) new software too, for both Quartz and existing palmtops. On show was Chess 2000, by Purple Software, one of the first games to be playable by two people with their own palmtops via infrared, SMS or Internet connections. Palmtop Software made much of their new route planning software, TomTom (see page 4), using the emerging WAP standard. Market Monitor offered real time financial data and stock price feeds from Bloomberg on future Quartz devices.

## Ericsson show first fully working Quartz device

The Ericsson booth provided the show's biggest draw for EPOC fans. They displayed the first fully working prototype Quartz device, combining EPOC and the communication industry's hottest technologies. This platform is ready for the latest in communications technology such as HSCSD (High Speed Circuit Switched Data) and GPRS (General Packet Radio Services), and with its triple band GSM support the communicator is a truly global device. It even includes a Bluetooth chip to connect wirelessly to other devices, plus a built-in GPS receiver.

*Sebastian Hochstetter*



The games, which will be available later in 2000, will offer users the chance to pit their wits against each other wherever they are in the world, either via the Internet or through games resident on their hand-held devices.

Intuwave have also announced a partnership with Macromedia, to enable the development of advanced wireless content and services based on market-leading Macromedia Flash technology. Intuwave will begin by porting the Macromedia Flash Player to Symbian's EPOC platform, bringing rich, interactive, high-impact content to its wireless devices.

*www.intuwave.com*

## Symbian competence

Symbian have announced the Symbian Competence Centre program, a world-wide partnership initiative to drive the development of innovative Smartphones and Communicators. Working closely with Symbian's licensees, Symbian Competence Centres will offer a mixture of product and business development, engineering and project management skills.

Symbian has initially appointed ARM, Cadence, Digia, Dextra, Kanrikogaku Kenkyusho, Omron, Phoenix, Teleca, Vanteon, Wipro and Zi as Symbian Competence Centres. Covering the US, Asia Pacific, and Europe, these companies offer key technical, development and engineering support for companies developing Symbian based Wireless Information Devices.

*www.symbian.com*

## IBM/Symbian agreement

IBM and Symbian have announced a joint development agreement to create wireless enterprise applications for users of Smartphones and Communicators. The new applications will give mobile workers real-time access to web and corporate data and for the first time allow them to work with this information off-line, without the need for a continuous network connection.

*www.symbiandevnet.com*

## PDAMD.com supports EPOC

PDAMD.com, a major Internet resource for healthcare professionals who use PDAs, has extended the site's coverage to include EPOC reviews and articles. Their president commented "Until now the medical EPOC community has been somewhat fragmented, which has concealed the considerable amount of support that EPOC already has amongst healthcare professionals. We aim to promote the EPOC platform and provide a comprehensive resource for medical EPOC users."

*www.PDAMD.com*

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New OPL tutorial - Writing Multi-lingual Applications. Now available to all.
9 March 2000

# INDUSTRY NEWS

***In this regular feature we devote a single page to what's happening in the non-EPOC sector of mobile computing...***

Microsoft has announced that it will launch its new Pocket PC software by June 30th. This version of Windows CE will provide an operating system for compatible palm-sized computers only. New devices supported by the software will no longer bear the Windows CE logo but will be labelled 'Pocket PCs powered by Windows'.

Handhelds supported by the new software will have stereo sound output, to cater for the recent growth of MP3 music. Also included will be the new Internet Explorer for Pocket PC and other new applications. Casio, Hewlett Packard, Compaq and Symbol Technologies all plan to introduce Pocket PCs within the next few months.

Vodafone has announced a new partnership with Casio, with both companies envisaging a future based on a truly mobile Internet. Manufactured by Casio, the first device to be launched will be a mobile communicator that connects to Vodafone's Mobile Internet platform. It will feature a colour display, support for multimedia and a built-in digital camera as standard.

Palm has released its first colour organiser. The Palm IIIc features a 256 colour display, 8MB of memory, rechargeable battery, a faster processor and the latest Palm OS 3.5. Also new to the range is the Palm IIIxe, which is similar to the Palm IIIx but with more memory, OS 3.5 and no expansion slot.

Palm has also recently announced that it will be working with Sony to develop a new range of handheld mobile devices. These units will incorporate both Palm OS and Sony's Memory Stick technologies.

Rumours that Apple are planning to release a PDA are on the increase. The company has recently been working with Palm, and Apple's CEO is known to be a great admirer of the Palm OS platform. The upcoming version of the Mac operating system is also Palm friendly.

Finally, research company Dataquest has stated that sales of handheld computers in 1999 were up 47% on 1998. They also predict worldwide sales of approximately 7.7 million units in 2000 and 11 million in 2001.

*Andy Nott*

# Shareware Shorts

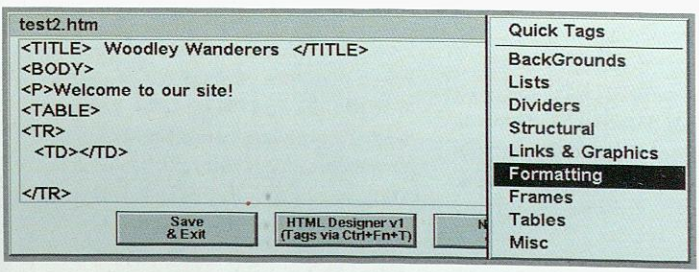
***Steve Litchfield, maintainer of the 3-Lib shareware library, takes a look at the latest additions to the world of Psion shareware...***

**The shareware firm Palmscape has sometimes been associated in the past with periods of inactivity and erratic support. Much of this was, I suspect, simply because the people behind the project had aims and ambitions beyond being a web-based shareware house and a lack of focus was the result.**

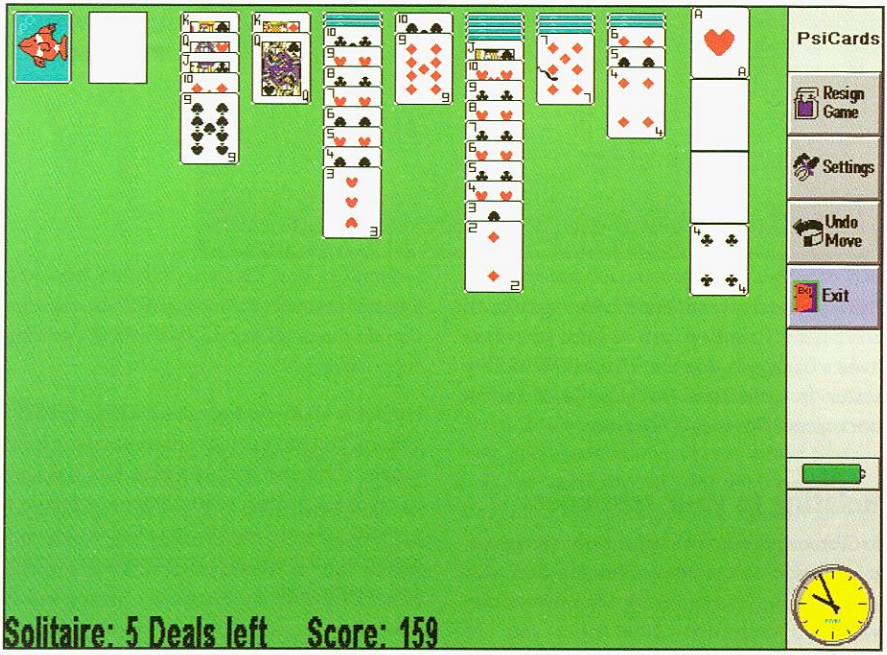
Perhaps inevitably, **Palmscape**'s team has now divided into two. The shareware authors and applications have been re-launched with a new name (**Pocket IQ**), a new snappy web site (*www.pocketiq.com*), new applications and a renewed enthusiasm. The Palmscape management are looking in new directions, including providing a one-stop solution for commercial products.

## New from Pocket IQ

Most of the old Palmscape-branded applications are now available from Pocket IQ, but there are a number of brand new authors and items as well. *HTML Designer* is a welcome replacement for the buggy old *HTMLEdit* that **Russ Spooner** (and then I) attempted to bring to market a few years ago. The main interface is a dialog-based text editor, onto which a background tag inserter pops up to offer assistance when required. It can't intelligently surround highlighted text with tag pairs, but it can insert virtually everything else. Templates can be created to aid in producing similar pages across a site and there are intelligent links to both nFTP and RMRFtp for when it's time to publish to the world.




*Letting HTML Designer take the strain*




*Seven solo card games in one—PsiCards*

HTML Designer also borrows (with permission) most of HTMLEdit's good ideas, especially the ability to 'drive' Web and use it to preview created pages, and the customizable and compilable tags database. Despite its slightly derivative nature, this looks well thought out and should become the *de facto* standard for web site maintenance on the go. We'll be looking in more detail at the subject of Internet publishing in issue 29.

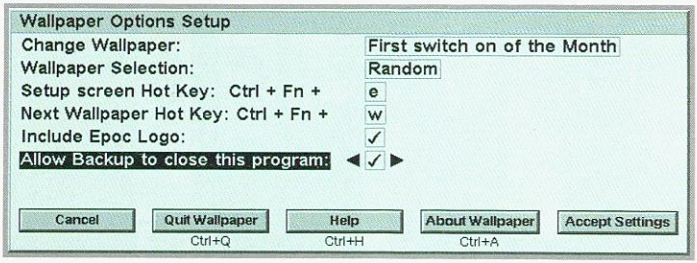
## On the cards

Claiming to be 'the ultimate card game suite for EPOC computers', **Pocket IQ**'s *PsiCards* boasts full colour support for the Series 7 and compatibles, keyboard or pen control and full card animation. The solitaire games included are Spider, Montana, Solitaire, Pyramid and TriPeaks.

*PsiWallpaper* is written specifically for the Series 5mx and is a 'novelty' utility to randomly change the wallpaper displayed on the system screen when you switch on. It comes with a special installer to reset your palmtop to display 16 greyscales on the System screen to improve the image quality, though this uses slightly more battery power.

## Backed up in a flash

**Pocket IQ**'s *FlashBack* is a fully customizable, CF-based backup utility. The idea is that you define personal profiles containing single files, folders or entire folder trees, and then FlashBack takes care of the rest. It closes any files that are open, backs up the profile, encrypts




*Configuring PsiWallpaper...*

the files and then reopens the files again once completed. FlashBack also reminds you whenever a backup is due and checks the battery status to make sure that you never start a backup with low main batteries.

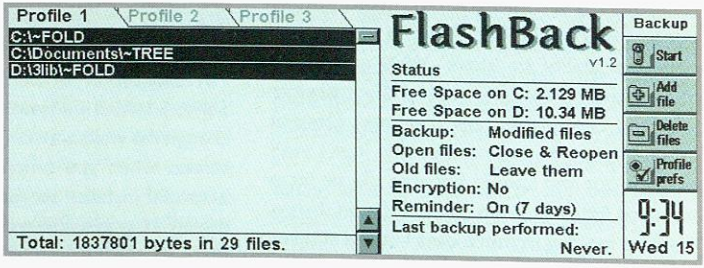
## Relating to your customers

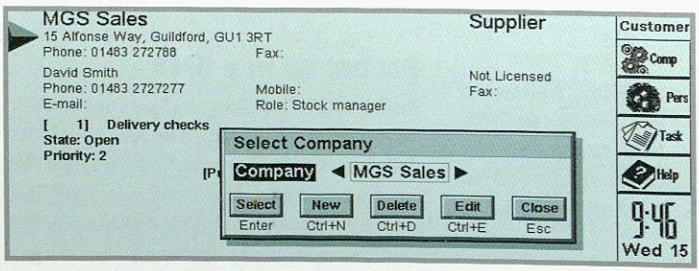
In *Customer Relation Manager*, you can register information on the companies you deal with, users/customers you are in communication with and customer-related tasks you are working on. You can also keep track of status information for each task, public and internal notes on their progress, and information on the products you are selling, reselling, supporting, etc.

*ListPlus* is a fully configurable list management system. You can use it to create anything from simple shopping and birthday lists through to complex project management. It features a multi-column layout, attachable memos, multiple sorting options, password system and search facility.

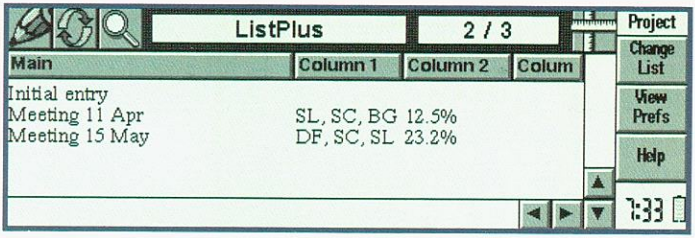
All the above applications are new from **Pocket IQ** and well worth a look. The web

*Local backups made easy with FlashBack*




*Link together companies, people and tasks in Customer Relation Manager*




*ListPlus on the Psion Revo*

site also contains updated and re-branded versions of *Porfolio*, *MiniCalc*, *Contact Manager*, *Trip+*, *Encrypt-it!* and *5Account*.

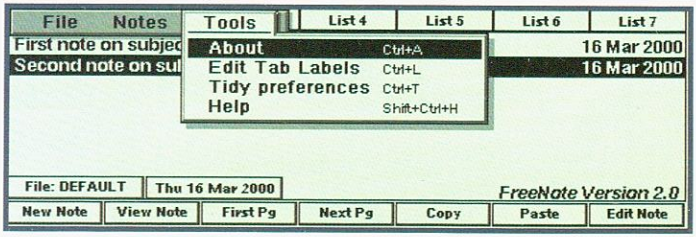
## More notes

Along similar lines to ListPlus above is *FreeNote*, by **Philip Bister**. It's also a general repository for short notes plus a multi-tabbed list maker and to-do manager. Cleverly, you can set up your own labels for the tabbed pages and set a lifespan for each FreeNote file so that old notes are automatically deleted.

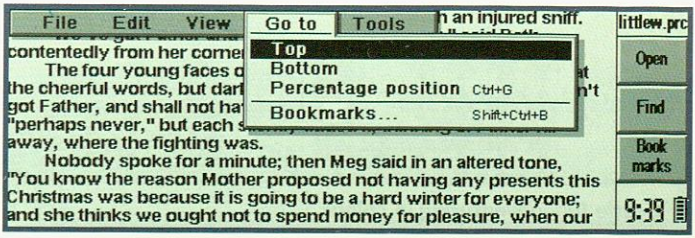
Designed for much longer text entries is **Simon Quinn**'s *EBook*, an electronic book (etext) viewer. It supports standard DOC compressed documents ('.prc' and '.pdb' files, as used on the Palm/Pilot organisers), '.TCR' etexts (as used on the Series 3), raw text and HTML files. Like the slightly buggy Vreader5 before it, EBook is both feature-packed and free. You're allowed up to 50 bookmarks per document, can view text either horizontally or vertically, and for ER5 palmtops a System screen recogniser is supplied for easy launching of all supported file types. EBook also has a small memory 'footprint', even when viewing large documents.

## More EPOC games

New from **FreEPOC** is *Adder*, a slick new version of the old 'growing snake' game.




*FreeNote—a Jotter alternative on the Revo*


File
Edit
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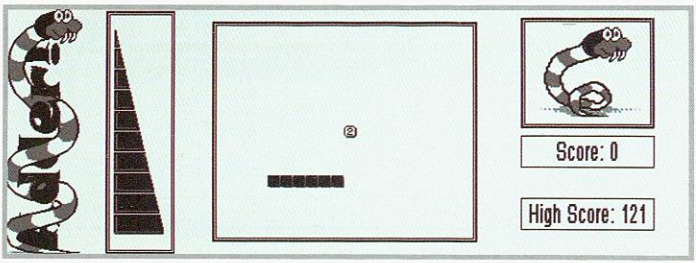
Bookmarks... Shift+Ctrl+B
contentedly from her corne
The four young faces o
the cheerful words, but dar
got Father, and shall not ha
"perhaps never," but each
away, where the fighting was.
Nobody spoke for a minute; then Meg said in an altered tone,
"You know the reason Mother proposed not having any presents this
Christmas was because it is going to be a hard winter for everyone;
and she thinks we ought not to spend money for pleasure, when our
littlew.prc
Open
Find
Book marks
9:39

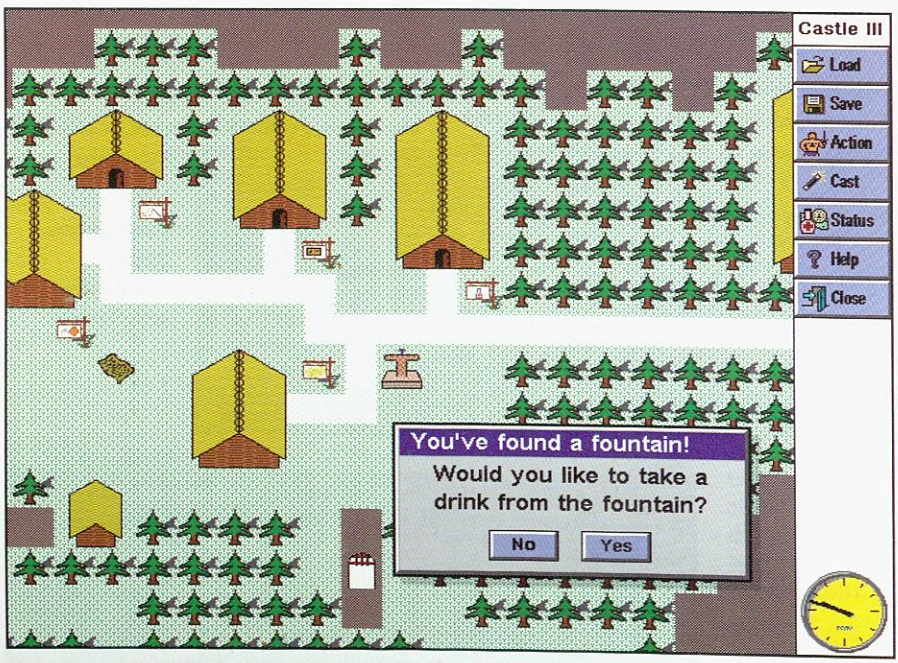
*EBook-engrossed in the classic 'Little Women'*




*Starting out through the undergrowth in Adder*

Apart from avoiding the walls and your own ever-expanding tail, there are numbered food blocks to eat and a trap door to navigate to at the end of each of the eight levels.

**Neuon**'s *Castle III* is also slick, with plenty of detail. You take on the rôle of either a mage, fighter or assassin, out to remove the demonic Storm Queen from her throne (after, if you're following the plot line from Castle II on the Series 3, she's kidnapped the maidens of the village in revenge for killing her lover). You have to fight your way through 20 levels, amassing gold and artifacts while stocking up on weapons and armour. All the usual RPG elements are here, with the option of playing using either the pen or keyboard, and it even runs on the Revo.



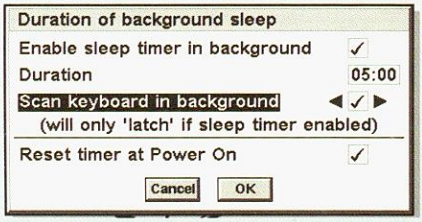

*Castle III—adventuring in colour*

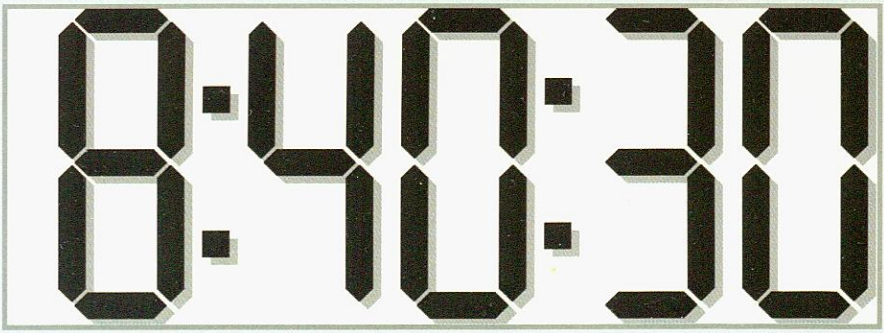
FEATURED UPDATE!

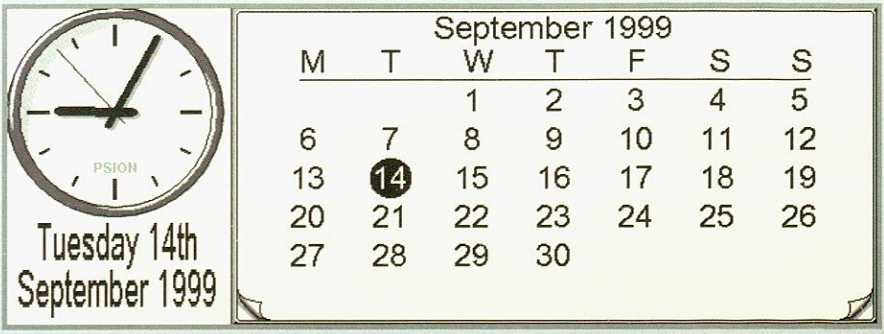
# Clock5

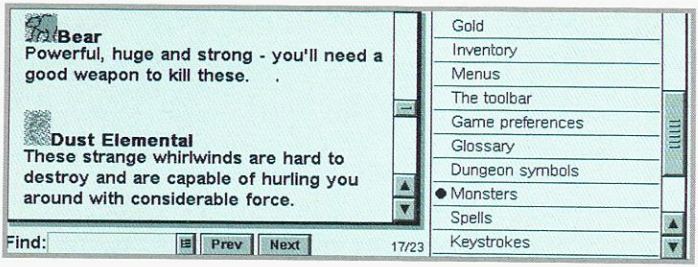
This password-protected 'screen-saver' clock by **Martin Guthrie** has been one of the most updated EPOC applications over the last two years. In addition to upgrades to the core program, separate language versions have been produced for Czech, German, French, Finnish, Italian, Norwegian, Dutch and Swedish. There are even special voice samples provided to make each version act as a night-time speaking clock. Most language versions are now up to v1.82.

Improvements in recent versions of *Clock5* have included the addition of Revo and Series 7/netBook compatibility, the addition of a count-down and count-up stopwatch, improved online help plus a number of cosmetic enhancements, improved sound effects and several bug fixes.






*Castle III's extensive (and graphical) online help system*

## No Series 3?

For the first time ever, there hasn't been a single new application written in the last two months for the Series 3 range. With over 2,000 items already available for this platform, there probably isn't much else (practical) left to write. I'll continue to monitor the scene though and let you know if anything surfaces.

## More mobile compatibility

**SG Software**'s popular *PhoneMan Pro* utility (reviewed in the last issue of *Palmtop*) for GSM mobile phonebook database and SMS management has been further upgraded. Direct infrared support is now included for Nokia 6110, 6150 and nk702 phones.

## Shareware availability

Please note that, by definition, many of the latest items featured in Shareware Shorts will *not* appear on existing Palmtop CDs, but on subsequent pressings of the disk. If you wish to receive every edition of the Palmtop CD then see page 113 for details.

For those with Internet access, an easy way to find software is to go to our 'Programmer directory' at *www.palmtop.co.uk/authors.htm* and look up the name of the author as highlighted in **bold** in this article. This will take you to the author's web site, from where you can find out more about the product and download it directly.

The vast majority of EPOC applications mentioned in Shareware Shorts run properly on the Psion Series 7, Series 5/5mx, Revo and compatibles, unless otherwise stated. If a program misbehaves on *your* EPOC computer, check the author's web site first and then email them if necessary.

**Programs not immediately traceable via their author's web page can all be found at *3lib.ukonline.co.uk/psifind.htm***

## What is shareware?

Written by professional programmers and enthusiasts to meet specific (and sometimes unusual) needs, shareware is often supplied for use on a thirty day trial basis. If you like the software you are then asked to send a payment to the author. Some programs are freeware and don't require any payment at all. Each program comes complete with information about how to install and use it, and how to pay for it.

## Where can I find it?

One way to get any of these programs is from the Internet. If you've got access to the web there are several on-line indices which link directly to the relevant author download page concerned.

Things are actually even easier if you haven't got Internet access. As long as the program concerned has been out for a month or so, you should find a copy on the latest edition of the Palmtop CD-ROM, indexed into the appropriate category.

## How do I use it?

Once you've found the file you want, there are three steps you may need to take:

1. Decompress the files if necessary. If you're new to computers you may not be familiar with compression. Psion applications normally have more than one component (e.g. the program itself, help files and pictures). These are normally compressed into one file, which makes them easier to distribute. Shareware on the Internet is most commonly compressed in 'Zip' format, and you can recognise these by the '.ZIP' at the end of the filename. Before you can install and run the program you need to extract these files with an 'unzip' program, which is freely available from your shareware supplier. If you use DOS, look for PKUNZIP, Windows users can use Winzip, and Mac users should try ZipIt or the commercial Stuffit Deluxe. You can also unzip files on your Psion without using another computer, using RMRZip, from www.rmrsoft.com .

2. Copy the files. You'll probably now need to transfer the unzipped files onto your Psion. To do this you'll need some external hardware, such as the PsiWin or EPOC Connect link cable or a Cyclone drive. Normally one of the unzipped software files is a text file (e.g. README.TXT), which can be read by any word processor. It explains how the program should be installed and where the files need to be copied to on your Psion. Series 5 and other EPOC owners should also look out for any special SIS files, which can be double-clicked on for really easy installation.

   See 'The Installation Game' in issues 14/15 and 'Installing software - the easy way' in issue 21 for a more comprehensive discussion of the above procedures.

3. Install the application. From your Series 3 or Siena System screen, select [Psion]+[I]. If the program was copied correctly the filename should appear in the list. Select it, press [Enter], and the icon should be installed, ready to run. EPOC users don't need to do this as the newly installed program will automatically appear on the Extras bar.

# MailBox

**Contribute and WIN PRIZES! EVERY letter published wins the author a free Palm-Tec case, worth at least £25!**

## Get global!

May I agree with the comments proffered by US reader Donald Robertson in your last issue, but from a UK perspective. Imagine my surprise when I opened my luggage after arriving in San Francisco to find the screen on my Series 5 had been broken during baggage handling. I did little about this until arriving in Los Angeles a week later when I went looking for a replacement.

Simple, I thought—buy a replacement machine (good excuse for a 5mx upgrade), connect the two and download the required files. Not so. After visiting a number of the largest US electrical goods retailers (and one or two specialists) in one of North America's largest cities, no-one had even *heard* of Psion, let alone stocked them. Interestingly, they all wanted to know exactly what it was and where to get one!

I telephoned some more. The few dealers that had heard of Psion all quoted delivery dates longer than practicable.

I then visited the web, only to learn of a new 'Series 7' machine, due to be launched just after my return to the UK. Since I'd bought a Series 5 about three months prior to the launch of the 5mx, I decided to wait.

As Mr Robertson has noted, global credibility requires a global *presence*, an area where, given my personal experience, I've no doubt that Palm machines hold considerable competitive advantage.

I've chosen the Series 5mx as a replacement and may enter the netBook market at some stage, but I might not. What these manufacturers must appreciate is that while many 'thinking' computer users in general and British ones in particular like to be different, Palm and Windows CE are threats that will not be addressed without substantially increased US penetration. My personal experience suggests it's not that our North American cousins aren't interested.

*Andrew O'Neill, St Peter Port, Guernsey*

## Palmtop or laptop?

I'm surprised to see that you're covering the Series 7 and netBook within the pages of Palmtop magazine. Surely these aren't palmtop computers at all, but closer in size to a laptop?

*Derek Smedley, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire*

**Although the Series 7 and netBook are too large to be classed as palmtops, they are**

*Don't forget that you can submit your letters by normal mail to the address given on page 1, or alternatively by email, to editor@palmtop.co.uk. Please be sure to put 'MailBox' in the 'subject' line of your email.*

still quite portable and thus often suitable for people 'on the move'.

*Palmtop* magazine is evolving into a resource for all EPOC users, so we hope to include coverage of all future EPOC devices as they appear. On a more general note, the majority of material in the magazine now applies to everything from Revo to netBook. The built-in software is largely identical across all devices and most new software being developed is designed to work with all screen sizes—which is often the only *practical* difference between the various models.

Don't be put off by the sight of screen shots showing something other than your own display size, as the text will normally reveal that the article is applicable to your EPOC machine too. The boxouts at the end of each review will make it clear if a product is incompatible with your machine type, and any features that don't apply to certain devices are normally made clear.

The only exception to this is the Oregon Scientific Osaris, which often won't run standard EPOC software due to its tiny screen size. -Ed.

## Spot the difference?

I give up. Looking at 'EPOC goes colour' on page 46 of the last issue, I just *can't* see any difference between the two images. What was I supposed to be looking for?

*Samantha Delaney, Decatur, Illinois, USA*

**The resolution, i.e. the number of dots, in each picture is identical—it's the colours that are different. Looking at the texture of the cat's fur, the picture on the left shows smooth, continuous shading, whereas the one on the right appears artificially 'dithered'—if you look closely enough. Here are the images zoomed in a little, to make the differences a little clearer... - Ed.**

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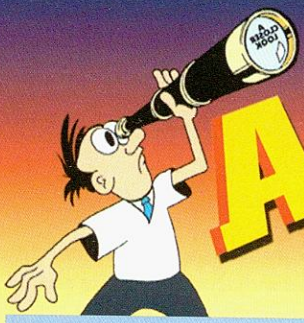


# A Closer Look

*...at some of the newest and most interesting products for your Psion*

## Star Ratings:

★★★★★ Excellent
★★★★☆ Good
★★★☆☆ Average
★★☆☆☆ Fair
★☆☆☆☆ Poor
☆☆☆☆☆ Dismal

## Interpreting reviews

**Quality:** the *Quality* star rating reflects how well the product works, whether it includes all the features you'd expect, whether the interface is consistent and easy to use, and in data-based software products it also reflects the quality of the information contained in the program.

**Value:** the *Value* star rating reflects the value for money of the product, taken within the context of what the program (or other product) does. Therefore a simple utility program will be rated differently to a sophisticated application at the same price.

## Does it work on my palmtop?

Items reviewed should work with the Psion Revo, Series 5/5mx, Series 7/netBook and Ericsson MC218 unless otherwise specified, though some programs may not currently support colour or utilise the full screen of the Series 7 and netBook.

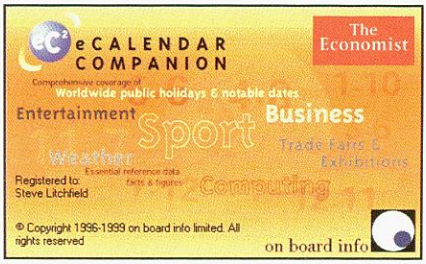
Programs *may* run on the Oregon Scientific Osaris, though part of the display may be clipped due to the Osaris' smaller 320x200 pixel screen. Osaris users should always consult the program developer before purchasing.


Economist eCalendar Companion 23
MBMView 26
Opera 29
RealMaps 33
Professional Symbian Programming 36
IBM Microdrive 38
Series 7/netBook docking station 40

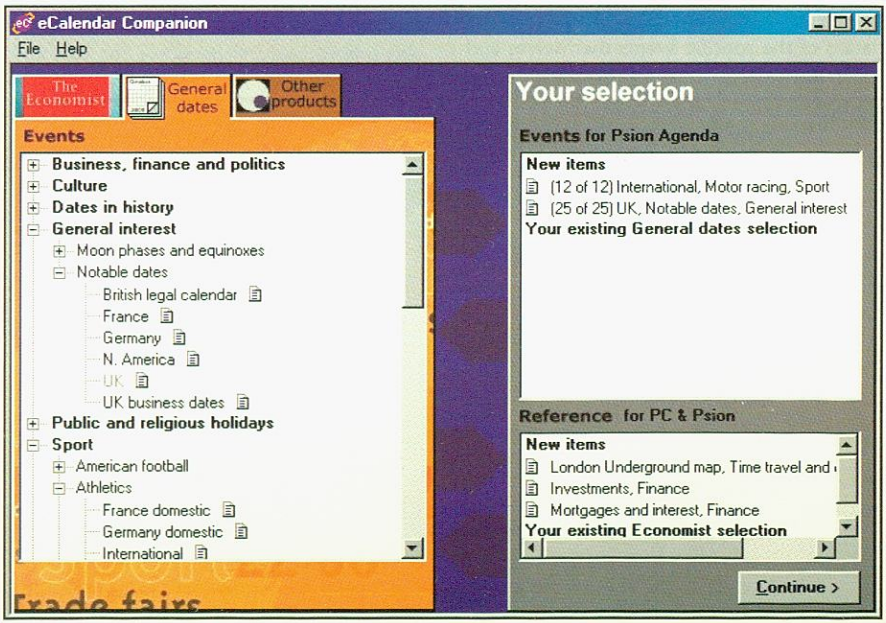
## Economist eCalendar Companion

Every year the Psion/EPOC world reveals a new version of On Board Info's dates and information product (we looked at the previous incarnation in issue 20). And not just to reflect another 12 months of events either, as both the installation interface and the range of events and data it covers continues to improve markedly. Of course, Agenda files sprinkled around the Internet will give you basic holiday and sporting dates, but nothing anywhere near as comprehensive as those on the Economist eCalendar Companion CD.

The Windows PC-only installer requires you to specify your preferred calendar software (Agenda on the Series 3 or Series 5/Revo for most of us) and destination for the assorted reference information (usually your palmtop




once again). One annoyance is that there's little support for those of us with two hand-held devices. In order to stream data into a Series 3 and Series 5, or Revo and netBook, or even a Series 5mx and Palm/Pilot, it's necessary to completely re-install and set up the product each and every time you switch devices. In practice, it's easiest to let eCalendar Companion know about just one palmtop, relying on normal synchronization



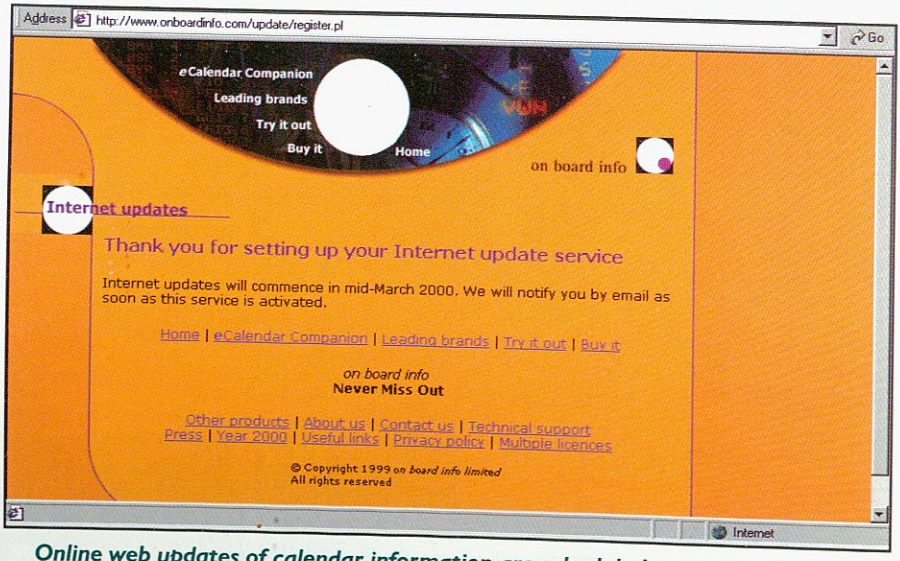

*eCalendar Companion's PC-based event selection interface*

*A typical event display, inserted into an EPOC Agenda*

activities to propagate event information to other devices, if needed.

The main category browser (that allows you to choose what data is transferred to your palmtop) is even slicker than before, with the left-hand window pane showing collapsible categories ('Business, finance and politics', 'Culture', 'Dates in history', 'General interest', 'Public and religious holidays', 'Sport' and 'Trade fairs and exhibitions') and numerous sub-categories. Within each of the latter, right-clicking an item offers the ability to preview details of the specific events themselves and double-clicking adds it to your current selections, shown in the right-hand window pane.

As with previous versions of the Companion, there's a lot of mainly textual reference information. Much of this is rather disappointing as it makes little use of specific EPOC features, although there's still enough included to make it a welcome free addition to the main product. As with the date selections, a browser on the PC lets you install just the information you need.


Address
http://www.onboardinfo.com/update/register.pl
Go
eCalendar Companion
Leading brands
Try it out
Buy it
Home
on board info
Internet updates
Thank you for setting up your Internet update service
Internet updates will commence in mid-March 2000. We will notify you by email as soon as this service is activated.
Home | eCalendar Companion | Leading brands | Try it out | Buy it
on board info
Never Miss Out
Other products | About us | Contact us | Technical support
Press | Year 2000 | Useful links | Privacy policy | Multiple licences
© Copyright 1999 on board info limited
All rights reserved
Internet

***Online web updates of calendar information are scheduled to start very soon...***

When you're happy with your category selections, eCalendar Companion copies any new items over to your master Agenda document on the palmtop. The CD we reviewed covered events up to around the end of this year, although On Board Info promise a sophisticated and personalised update service managed from their web site, hopefully in place by the time you read this. Event updates (both new and altered items) can then be downloaded at your convenience for the next 12 months.

The most impressive features of eCalendar Companion are the scope of the calendar information and the range of organisers and desktop PIMs supported. Events included range from the National Book awards in New York to the Polish presidential election, from Sting in concert in London to details of the Henley Regattas. I found several instances of dates appearing incomplete, but was assured by On Board Info that this was because they had not yet been finalised by the relevant organisers, and that updated information would be disseminated via their update service in the near future.

On the palmtop front, it knows about all Psion variants, Palm/Pilot organisers and Windows CE devices. On the desktop, it directly supports Day-Timer, Notes, Organizer and Outlook, with Act! and Maximizer 'coming soon'.

Although the determined user can get much of this information without cost from other sources, eCalendar Companion offers the widest possible choice in the specific format you require, updated regularly and all from a single source. In the busy world we live in, this sort of convenience is worth paying for.

*Steve Litchfield*

## Economist eCalendar Companion

**From:** On Board Info Ltd

**Contact:** *www.onboardinfo.com*

**Availability:** Now (English only)

**Runs on:** All EPOC machines, plus most other handheld devices and PC-based PIMs (see text). Can only be installed via a Windows PC.

**Price:** £25 including VAT (incl. 12 months of online updates)

Quality ★★★★☆

Value ★★★★☆

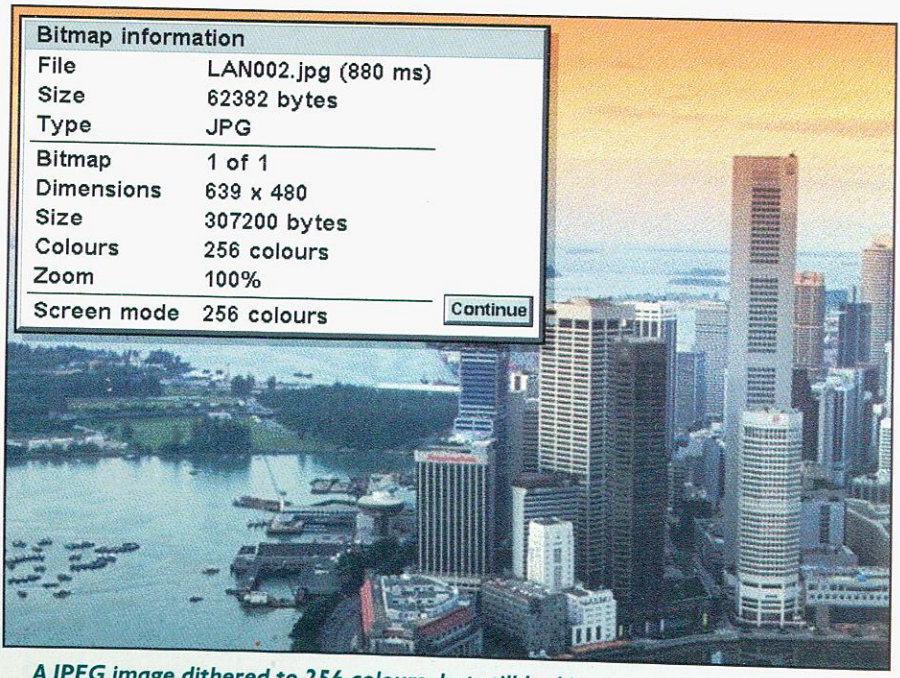
## MBMView

Probably the biggest difference between commercial and shareware applications is that the former are usually designed as 'complete', published and then largely forgotten (with a few honourable exceptions), whereas the latter tend to evolve over time in response to user requests. Lieuwe De Vries' MBMView is perhaps the best example I've ever seen of the shareware evolution process in action.

From a simple programmer's tool to view and handle MBM ('Multi-Bit-Map') picture files, as used in just about every EPOC program ever written, MBMView has gradually expanded its remit over the last three years and now boasts a dozen other functions and a corresponding appeal to a far greater range of EPOC customers. Although it still works quite happily on the Series 5 and siblings, within the limits of the 16-greyscale screens, I've been testing the new, colour-enabled version 4.0 of MBMView on the Series 7, with its 256 colour, 640x480 pixel screen.

The import and export routines which let MBMView handle standard BMP, GIF, JPEG and TIFF format images were always little more than a curiosity in black and white, but when coupled with EPOC hardware that uses a colour screen, MBMView is a real boon.

One curiosity of its BMP and GIF image export functions is that 'lossy' JPEG routines appear to be used internally, artificially degrading non-photographic images. This needs to be fixed for MBMView to be usefully employed handling screen shots and line art for export to the desktop.




*A JPEG image dithered to 256 colours, but still looking presentable*

*The dithering is more obvious when zoomed in, but is rarely a problem*

Although the forced dithering of photographs down to 256 colours means that it's not practical to rework processed images on the desktop at a later stage, there's still quite a lot of use for full screen, colour photos on the Series 7 and netBook. In particular, MBMView can be used to import, crop and copy images to the clipboard, for pasting into Sketch objects in Word or Data, perhaps for a product catalogue or customer presentation. Although Sketch's built-in painting tools are restricted to 16 colours, pasting in a pre-prepared 256-colour image seems to work fine, as does embedding the result into another application.

In fact (and even simpler), if all that's needed are the pictures themselves then MBMView has its own 'Slide show' function, in which images can be repeatedly cycled (and zoomed to fit the screen) at a speed you choose. If you need to bring up images quickly, without waiting for EPOC's occasionally tardy 'Open file...' dialog, pressing [L] (or the 'Select | List' menu command) conveniently lets you choose a suitable file with a single keypress. A 'Mosaic' (thumbnail) function offers a helpful summary of the contents of a multi-image file or a specific folder.

Another use for MBMView might be to display image attachments that have been emailed to you, or to prepare artwork created under EPOC for emailing and eventual viewing by desktop computer users. Handling of these 'foreign' file formats is surprisingly quick: a 50K JPEG image was displayed in under two seconds, which compares extremely favourably to the interminably slow JPEG handling in Web (about 20 times slower).

*Dull by comparison to the Series 7 and netBook, but still very useful for non-colour EPOC*

Perhaps the biggest omission in MBMView is a resizing or resampling function. Although it allows zooming in and out by 10% increments and by setting the overall zoom factor, this merely changes the way the image appears on screen—there's no change to the underlying bitmap. In the absence of a resizing function, copying images into Sketch and resizing them there is the simplest workaround.

Also affecting only the on-screen display is the 'Change screen mode...' command, in which you can set the EPOC display to one of (up to) six display modes, from '2 grey scales' to '256 colours'. This can be extremely useful in testing how users of other EPOC palmtops with different capabilities might see your images. If you do need to permanently reduce the colour depth of an image, MBMView offers a 'Reduce colours...' command.

One feature which marks MBMView as a particularly polished application is that during installation it loads 'recognisers' for MBM, GIF, JPEG, BMP and TIFF files. This prevents the dreaded spread of files marked with '?' icons, replacing them with MBMView's own icon and letting you tap on any one in the System screen to open it directly. The polish continues into the documentation and help screens, the latter including dozens of tips on using MBMView more effectively.

Despite all its support for colour images, the original tools for creating and manipulating program bitmap resource files are still a major feature and work as well as ever. As a long-time programmer myself, MBMView is always one of the first utilities I load onto any new EPOC machine. Together with a good painting package (see Living with RMRArt, on page 47), applications can be created purely on the palmtop, with no requirement for a desktop computer whatsoever.

An essential tool for developers and now a valuable asset for anybody wanting to handle and view images on the move, MBMView remains the seminal EPOC graphics utility.

*Steve Litchfield*

**MBMView**

**From:** Usual shareware sources

**Availability:** Now (English only)

**Runs on:** All EPOC machines

**Price:** $25 (around £15)

Quality ★★★★☆

Value ★★★★☆

PREVIEW

## Opera

The EPOC port of the well-known Opera web browser has to be one of the most eagerly awaited applications for a long while, following critical acclaim on the desktop, where it has a reputation for efficiency and speed.

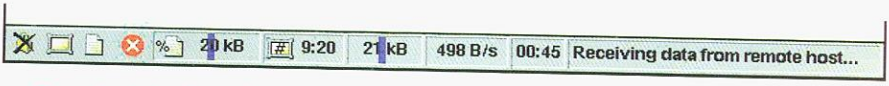
A public beta was released late in February for all current EPOC palmtops, and rapidly progressed to Beta version 4, which was used in this preview. There are two different versions: one for original Series 5 'Classic' machines and another for newer ER5 models. Although you can run it on a Revo, with 1.7MB taken by the application itself and 2.5MB or more needed to run, there won't be room to install or use much else.

One of the biggest complaints levelled against EPOC's built-in Web application has been that it doesn't allow secure online shopping and banking, and so this feature is going to be key to the success or failure of Opera. Using the beta, I've successfully accessed several secure sites, wandered around various e-commerce pages and registered shareware, as you can see from the screen shot below.

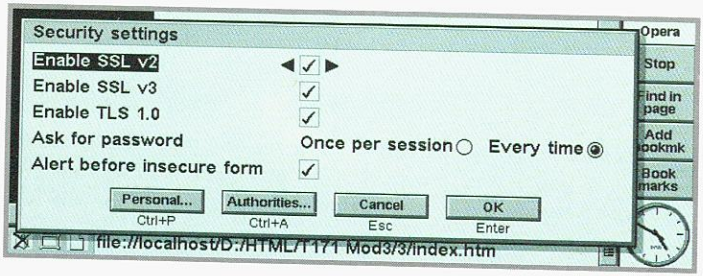
Opera's other major attraction is JavaScript support. This may seem a strange thing to say, but there doesn't seem to be any way to turn it off. There's so much code around that is either badly written or specific to a particular browser that errors and crashes are common enough to make it helpful to be able to disable JavaScript entirely. Indeed, some of the web pages on *www.psion.com* cause Opera to complain and the phone line

RegSoft.com
SOFTWARE SALES & REGISTRATION SERVICE
MBMView
Ordering Options
• Option 1 : On-Line Ordering - Please fill out all parts of the order form on this page and click the Continue button when complete .
• Option 2 : FAX Ordering - Click Here .
• Option 3 : Postal Mail Ordering - Click Here .
• Option 4 : Phone Ordering - Call 1-877-REGSOFT (1-877-734-7638)
(international orders please call 770-319-2718)
Please have your Credit Card Ready and the following information :
Product ID : 4245
And any required fields below.
w.regsoft.net/regsoft/vieworderpage.php3?productid=4245

*Placing an online order, displaying a padlock to indicate secure operation*




*Opera's status bar, showing controls for image display and download progress*




*Setting the security options in Opera*

to drop, preventing any further connection until the browser has been restarted.

One of my pet hates is web sites that check which browser a visitor is using and either send them to an edited version of the site or tell them to go away and get Internet Explorer or Netscape. For example, Psion present a simplified version of their site to their own EPOC browser.

During my own tests, the Financial Times' web site (*www.ft.com*) simply refused to let Opera in, despite the latter identifying itself as Opera version 4 and being compatible with Netscape 4. Also a problem was BT's web site (*www.bt.com*), where pages appear to be blank unless you use one of the browsers it expects.

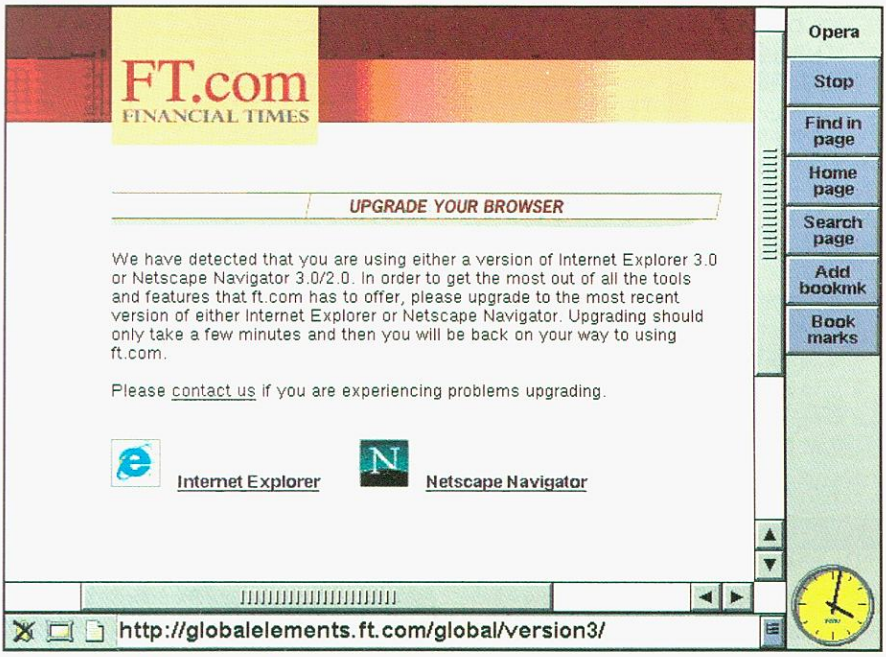
Some JavaScript features make no sense on a Psion, and so things like scrolling text in the status bar and cascading menus when the pointer is moved over a hot spot are not supported by Opera.

The convention used by Psion's Web browser of a single tap or press of the [Tab] key to show the destination of a hyperlink hasn't been implemented here—tapping a link instead takes you straight to its destination, just like browsers on other platforms. Consequently there's no indication of where a link will take you, which sometimes makes it feel as though you're working in the dark.

As the version of Opera tested here is a beta release, there are naturally things that haven't been implemented yet: two obvious omissions are being able to disconnect from the Internet and firing up Email for 'mailto:' links. In addition, some menu commands don't work as expected and it isn't possible to save images, view local MBM graphics or edit bookmarks. Java (see issue 25, page 65)

### SSL?

Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) allows web browsers to transfer information in a more secure manner. It is most commonly used for handling credit card details when shopping online and for banking transactions. It's easy to detect when you are accessing a secure part of a web site as the address line in your browser will start with *https://* and the status line will usually show a locked padlock icon.

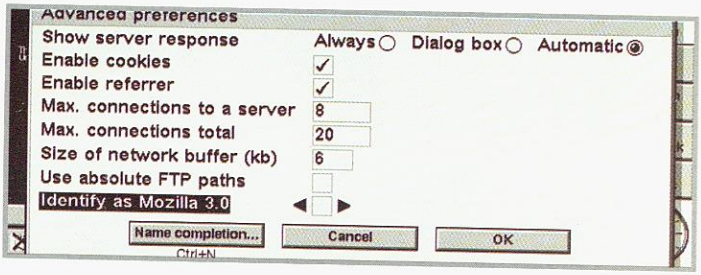

FT.com
FINANCIAL TIMES
UPGRADE YOUR BROWSER
We have detected that you are using either a version of Internet Explorer 3.0 or Netscape Navigator 3.0/2.0. In order to get the most out of all the tools and features that ft.com has to offer, please upgrade to the most recent version of either Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator. Upgrading should only take a few minutes and then you will be back on your way to using ft.com.
Please contact us if you are experiencing problems upgrading.
Internet Explorer
Netscape Navigator
Opera
Stop
Find in page
Home page
Search page
Add bookmk
Book marks
http://globalelements.ft.com/global/version3/

*An unhelpful response from a web site...*

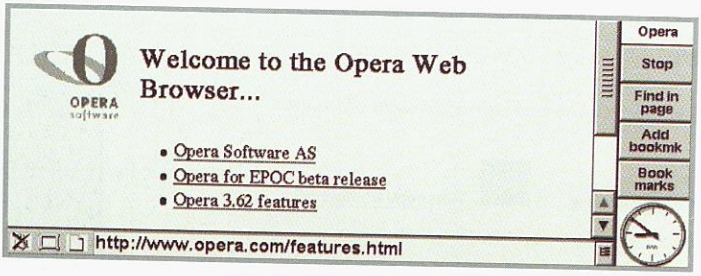
isn't currently supported, nor can you launch Opera by double tapping on an HTML file, as you can with the Psion browser. It betrays its heritage at times and feels more like a Windows application than an EPOC one, but some of these points will doubtless be addressed in future releases and the programming team is being doubled in an effort to increase the rate of progress.

The speed of rendering pages is a major area where Opera scores. Loading a page from an EPOC palmtop's internal memory is a good benchmark as it removes the effect of any network problems. As a demanding test, I loaded a page containing around 40K of complex nested tables, done in turn on a Series 5, 5mx and a 190MHz netBook.

| | Web | Opera | Speed increase with Opera |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Series 5** | 23 mins | 2 min 55 sec | 8 x |
| **Series 5mx** | 2 min 45 sec | 1 min 5 sec | 2.5 x |
| **netBook** | 4 min 10 sec | 17 seconds | 14.7 x |




*Opera's advanced configuration screen*




*Welcome to Opera...*

The two main points to note are how much faster Opera is when there's a lot of work to be done, and how slow the built-in Web software is on the netBook. The page displayed after just over a minute but couldn't be scrolled for a further *three* minutes—Web on the 5mx makes a much better job of it. Fastest on all platforms, Opera makes the display of complex pages far more practical.

More 'average' pages typically open in half to one third of the time needed by the Psion browser. This is thanks to the fact that Opera doesn't rely on the standard EPOC code libraries, which are mainly aimed at more general tasks such as word processing. A consequence of this is, however, that it can take up to 2.5MB when running instead of the modest 400K needed by Web.

So is Opera worth bothering with? If you need to access online banking services, if you want to place online orders via secure servers, or if you simply want a faster browser, the answer is most definitely yes. Psion apparently think so too, as they have just announced a licensing agreement whereby the release version of Opera will be shipped as an integral part of Series 7 and netBook machines. The absence of features such as SSL support has made Psion's own web browser look somewhat limited, and Opera is an easy way for them to set this straight.

*John Woodthorpe*

**Opera**

**From:** www.opera.com

**Availability:** to be announced

**Runs on:** All EPOC machines

**Price:** $35 (around £22)

| | |
|---|---|
| Quality | n/a (beta) |
| Value | n/a (beta) |

## RealMaps

When first demonstrated, the sight of a real-time moving map display on your palmtop is always impressive, even more so in RealMaps' case because the display can be of similar quality to a good national map book. This is hardly surprising as the maps used usually have to be scanned from your favourite 'real' map of the area required (hence the program's name). Whether this is an advantage or a disadvantage depends on how much time you're prepared to spend setting up RealMaps and what you want from the application.

At its simplest, this is just a bitmap viewer, letting you scroll around a very large image. But with some intelligently conceived extensions, RealMaps offers a number of advantages when the image happens to be of a favourite map.

To make the most of these, the program needs to know the latitude and longitude coordinates of the bottom-left and top-right corners of your map image. If you're planning to scan an official map you already own, latitude and longitude can usually be read off easily from the lines and annotations; if you own a desktop-based mapping or route planning application and plan to export or grab a map from this as a bitmap, coordinate information should be even easier to come by.

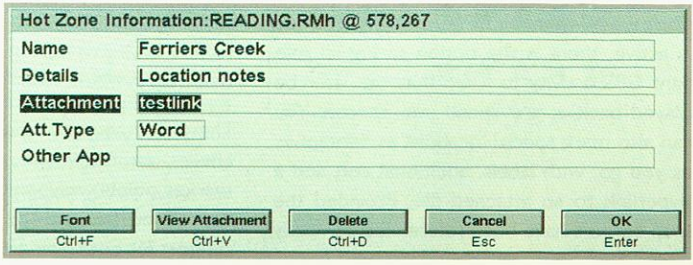
Either way, a few minutes working with the tools in PsiWin (and in some cases with Sketch or MBMView—see page 26) should yield a suitable 'MBM' EPOC picture file that RealMaps can open and use. There are good tutorials to help with this process on the RealMaps web site, plus examples and demonstrations.

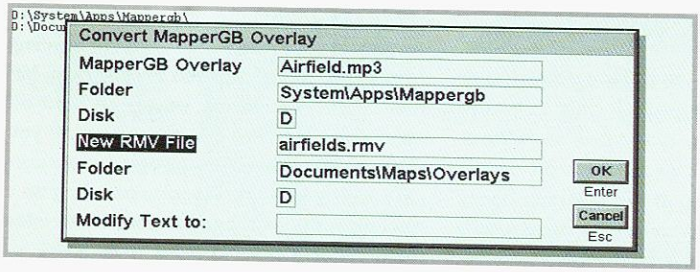
Do note, incidentally, that maps produced in this way are still subject to the original's copyright, and cannot be passed on to others.

The world isn't really flat, of course, and the simplification that attempts to interpolate accurate coordinates between two corners

*In GPS moving map mode, having just turned off the A4 near Sonning...*

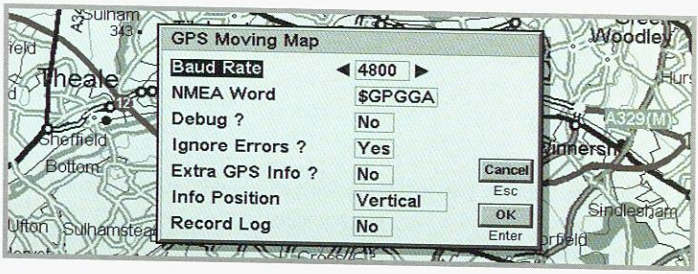
*Pressing the spacebar lets you add information and hyperlinks to a RealMaps hotzone*






*Converting the PsiMapper/GB overlay into native RealMaps format*

*Flexible GPS communications mean that you can connect almost any receiver...*



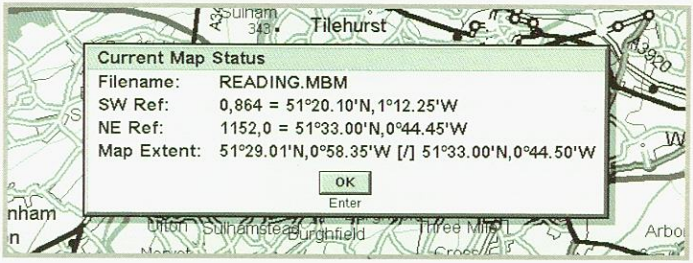

of a rectangle is only useable over a region of up to around 20km in 'height'. This is fine for many purposes though, especially for RealMaps' flagship GPS moving map feature. I tested it with Palmtop Software's GPS (see issue 26 for a full review), but RealMaps' moving map dialog is sufficiently flexible to work with almost any GPS receiver on the planet. If your receiver happens to be made by Garmin then even better, as RealMaps includes hooks into Jonathan Duff's popular PsiGar5 utility, populating its waypoint database with marked locations (ready for downloading back into the GPS unit).

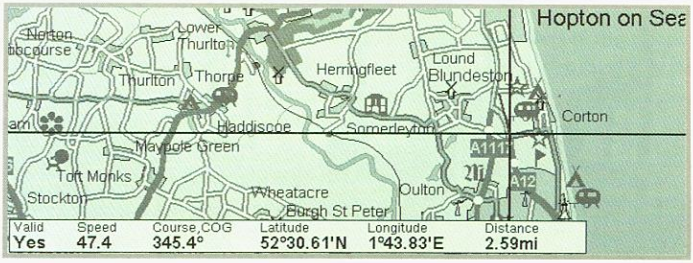
Although most manual RealMaps features don't work when the GPS moving map mode is active, there is the option to log all relevant GPS activity to a file that can later be played back at any speed you choose. You can also mark special locations as 'Hotzones' as you go, with labels, additional text and a hyperlink to an attached file. Provided the map corners have been referenced correctly, the RealMaps system is extremely effective, with the (customizable) cross-hair appearing exactly where it should be at all times. Indeed I found reported locations to be far more accurate than the rather vague vector creations of Route Planner Millennium (also reviewed in issue 26).

One of the disadvantages of using map images rather than computer-generated vector maps is that it's much more difficult to zoom in and out—for most purposes you should consider RealMaps as operating at a single zoom level and create your map images to suit. Once opened and referenced, coordinate (and other) information can be cleverly saved back into unused parts of the MBM file to save having to look up corner locations for that map in future.

There are several other features for mapaholics on the move. Favourite positions, marker points, waypoints and 'home' can all be defined (and saved) for each map, with support for both plain text and 'RMV' overlay

*The Map status screen—note the reference points, in this case the same as the map extents*




*Realmaps showing position, speed and direction*

files. The former allow simple annotations and line drawing, perhaps created or exported on the desktop. The latter, although native to RealMaps, can be created from scratch in Data or converted from existing Psi-Mapper/GB overlays with a special utility. All maps can be printed using a local printer or, with a few size restrictions, using a linked PC's print system.

A lot of iteration has gone into the RealMaps interface, with single keypresses mimicking their [Ctrl] key counterparts for extra speed of use and with a great deal of possible customization throughout. Installation was slick and multi-lingual and the program possesses one of the most comprehensive help databases I've ever seen.

One improvement I'd like to see is an extra 'pseudo' level of zoom, enlarging the image (even at the expense of a 'blocky' look) for those of us with poor eyesight or trying to decipher the map in a quick glance while on the move.

This is a mature mapping utility with enough guidance and forethought to help even beginners become competent cartographers and navigators.

*Steve Litchfield*

**RealMaps**

**From:** *www.realmaps.co.uk*

**Availability:** Now (several languages)

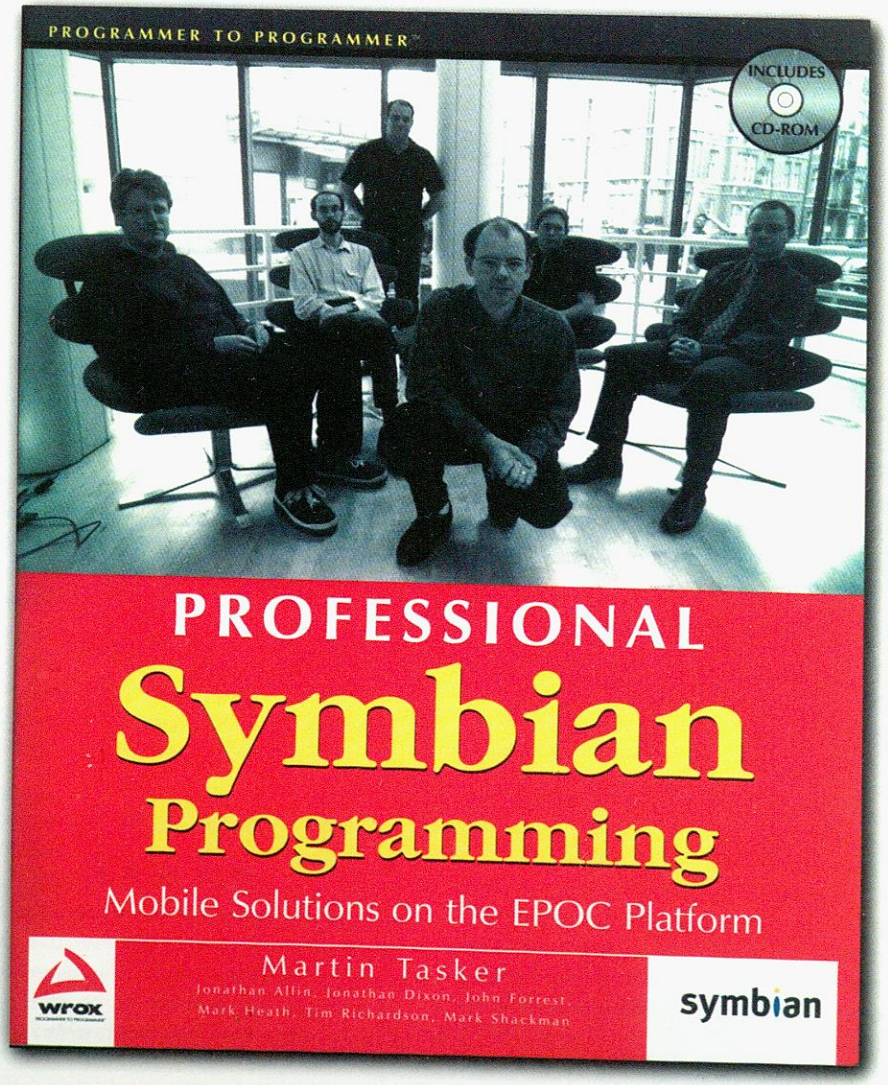
**Runs on:** All EPOC machines

**Price:** £10

| | |
|---|---|
| Quality | ★★★★½ |
| Value | ★★★★½ |

## Professional Symbian Programming

A quarter of a million words, over 1000 pages and plenty of blood, sweat and tears went into Martin Tasker's next generation programming tome for EPOC, and it shows. From the opening chapters in which he entertainingly introduces EPOC and its development history, to the fine details of how to write applications that use every part of EPOC's rich functionality, this is very obviously a labour of love. The text throughout is well written and



divided into manageable chunks. But before you rush out and buy a copy, a word or two of warning.

If you've never programmed in C++ before, you'll enjoy the first few chapters. But then you'll be scared rigid by most of the next 950 pages. Professional Symbian Programming is fairly and squarely aimed at helping existing C++ programmers get to grips with the ideals and specifics of EPOC and its SDKs (Software Development Kits). The sheer size of both the book and the learning curve it helps to navigate means that prospective purchasers will almost certainly be people who are working full-time at the task.

Although OPL hobbyists and part-time coders are left standing at this point, today's Psion and EPOC world is gradually turning ever more to C++ for serious, efficient applications and the need for this book has never been greater. And after all, it's not as if good resources for OPL programmers don't already exist, in the form of example applications, several books and numerous web-based tutorials. OPL is mentioned in this book, but only as a short 50 page primer for C++ experts.

The author briefs the C++ programmer, step by step, on all EPOC essentials, using the recurring theme of a two-player 'battleships' game as an example of many of the techniques introduced. The chapters include 'System structure', 'Strings and descriptors', 'Error handling and cleanup', 'Streams, stores and file-based applications', 'Graphics for display', 'The quest for device independence' and 'Active objects', among others. Other Symbian experts were also drafted in to write specialist chapters, on Java, WAP, Porting to EPOC and Connectivity.

The accompanying CD includes the full C++, OPL, Java and Connectivity SDKs, including the EPOC emulator (though not the Web application, for legal reasons). Given that each of these is normally a truly huge online download (between 25MB and 100MB), their inclusion in licensed form on the one CD is especially welcome. There are also many folders of example C++ project code.

Professional Symbian Programming is the bible upon which the next generation of EPOC programmers will be reared. I suspect a tiny proportion of the people reading this will be in their number, but that shouldn't detract from its definitive nature.

*Steve Litchfield*

**Professional Symbian Programming**

**From:** Wrox Press (www.wrox.com)

ISBN 186100303X

**Availability:** Now (English only)

**Price:** £37

| | |
|---|---|
| Quality | ★★★★½ |
| Value | ★★★★½ |

## IBM Microdrive

Many computer hardware developments go largely unnoticed these days. Processor speed increases year on year at a prodigious rate, but software 'upgrades' invariably soak up the extra power with their increasingly resource-hungry new features.

So, when the truly impressive technological feat of a 340 megabyte matchbook-sized hard disk drive landed on my desk, I couldn't help but take notice. To desktop computer users, 340MB is barely enough to house a modern operating system, but to an EPOC user it's huge. In fact, it's enough to store virtually every piece of EPOC software ever written.

The IBM Microdrive comes in two versions: 340MB and 170MB. Given that the former is only around 25% more expensive than the latter, it's well worth contemplating whether to spend a little extra to double your storage, just in case you ever need it.

The Microdrive is built into a Type II Compact-Flash casing, just 43x36x5mm thick—around 2mm thicker than the more common Type I flash. Existing Series 5/5mx, Ericsson MC218 and Oregon Osaris machines will only accept Type I cards, so regrettably it's *not* possible to use the Microdrive to boost the storage on your palmtop. Currently, only the Series 7 and netBook will accept the Microdrive.

If you own either of the above you have the choice of using the drive from the CF or PC-Card slots (the latter via the CF-to-PC-Card adaptor that's supplied with the Microdrive). The unit works straight out of the box, with no driver software to install and nothing to be configured.

For those with a technical interest, the drive itself has a 15 millisecond access time, can transfer data at an impressive 30-45MB per second and the platter rotates at 4500rpm. It can also be used in PCs equipped with a standard PC-Card slot, a digital camera with

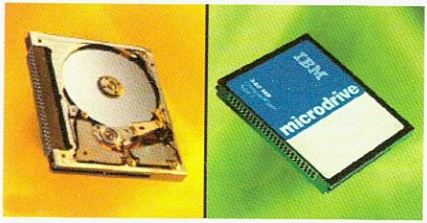
*Enough to keep even the most power-crazed Series 7 and netBook users happy...*

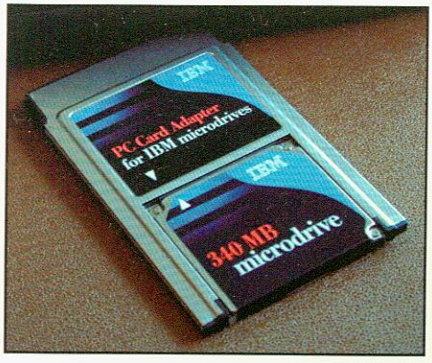
a Type II CF slot and even the Palm-compatible TRGPro organiser.

In terms of practical performance, the Microdrive is approximately 50% slower than CF disks when copying large volumes of files, but for individual files the difference is generally unnoticeable. The drive always spins down after a few seconds of inactivity, so you will often notice a time lag of at least a few seconds when accessing files. This is still excellent by desktop computer standards, but for those used to the near-instantaneous performance of solid state disks, it takes a little getting used to. Also, the drive understandably makes a slight (though fairly unobtrusive) whining noise during operation, so your Series 7/netBook will no longer be completely silent. If you want to maintain optimum performance it's probably advisable to keep most of your day-to-day work on the internal disk or CompactFlash, using the Microdrive primarily for large reference documents, route planning software and so on.

The Microdrive is a product that few people will need, given the comparatively small size of most EPOC programs and files. CF disks are now readily available in sizes of 80MB and beyond, and are both faster and cheaper. Taking into account their lack of moving parts they must ultimately be more robust. For those who *do* need either 170MB or 340MB of additional storage, this product is a must-have. For the ultimate power user, you can even put one drive in *both* of the Series 7/netBook's expansion slots, for a massive 680MB of local storage.

*Steve Clack*




**IBM Microdrive**

**From:** Major computer dealers

**Availability:** Now

**Runs on:** Series 7 and netBook only

**Price:** £279 inc. VAT for 170MB, £349 inc. VAT for 340MB

| | |
|---|---|
| Quality | ★★★★☆ |
| Value | ★★★☆☆ |

## Series 7/netBook docking station

Both the Series 7 and netBook are supplied with a mains adaptor that plugs into the right hand side of the machine and a standard 'Honda' connector on the left side to accept the PsiWin RS232 cable. Plugging in the mains cable is no trouble, but endlessly fiddling with the serial connector can become tedious. Also, the unattached cables have a tendency to fall down the back of your desk.

To the rescue comes Psion's dapper new docking station. Simply plug both the mains adaptor and RS232 cable into the back of the cradle, sit it in a convenient spot on your desk, then drop your Series 7/netBook into place, with its secondary bottom-mounted RS232/mains socket mating perfectly with the station.

Everything works faultlessly and a clever pivoting mechanism on the black centre section acts to release the computer smoothly from the base connector.

This is a stylish accessory that works faultlessly, though a little more weight would have helped it to stay put on the desk more effectively. The big problem with this docking station is the price. £80 for a 150g lump of plastic containing nothing more than a couple of connectors and wires is *seriously* excessive by any sane standards.

*Steve Clack*

### Series 7/netBook docking station

**From:** major Psion dealers

**Availability:** Now

**Price:** £79.95 including VAT

| | |
|---|---|
| Quality | ★★★★½ |
| Value | ★☆☆☆☆ |

# Can you MANAGE?

***Nigel Wright explores the world of EPOC file management, with a roundup of products and techniques***

**Effective file management is essential with the limited resources of a palmtop computer, and ironically, as CompactFlash (CF) cards continue to grow in size and the number of stored files rises, so does the potential for losing track of them. In any case, it's essential to keep track of which files are where and how large they are.**

The EPOC System screen is essentially a file manager in itself. While it's adequate for most needs, it does have limitations, particularly in its searching capabilities or when copying and moving large numbers of files around. Despite my best efforts, I'm quite bad at organising my own 80MB CF and was interested to see how an add-on file manager could help me.

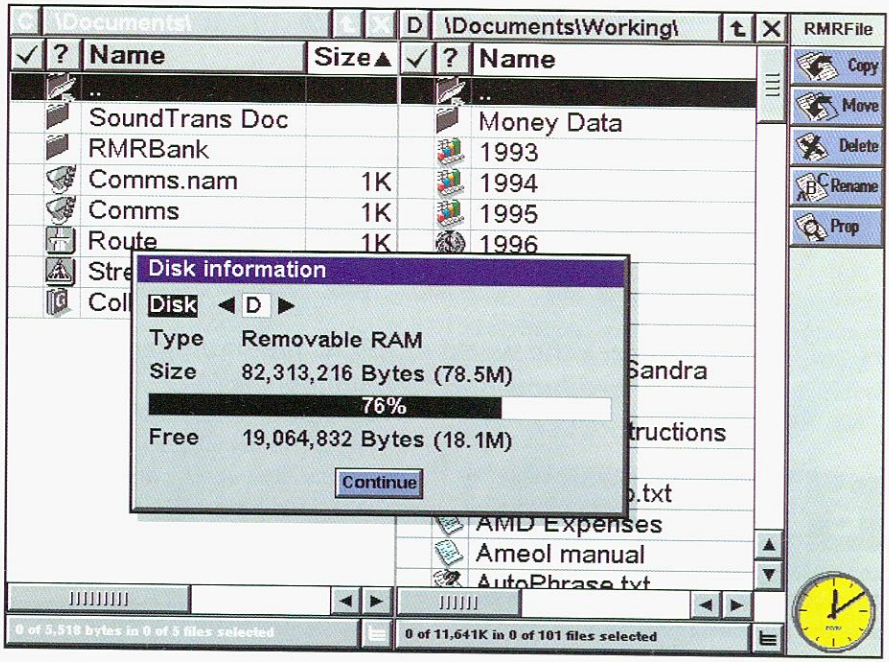
## RMRFile

RMR Software's shareware offering has a traditional file manager interface, based on 'panels'. Within each panel, you can browse through disks and folders, display the results of a find operation or look at the contents of a 'Zip' file. A maximum of two panels can be viewed simultaneously, which is fine on the Series 5 and compatibles, but in the case of the Series 7/netBook better use could be made of the extra screen space.

There's full keyboard support for copying, moving, and creating files and folders. Files and applications can be launched by tapping on them, and the stylus can be used to drag and drop files and folders from one location to another exactly as you'd do on a desktop computer. The whole process is intuitive and works well.

Searching is impressively quick, with comprehensive options for text within a file and for matches based on attribute, type, date, size and so on. I particularly liked the user-definable list of bookmarks that allows speedy navigation (including folders in the system ROM)—a feature EPOC has been crying out for.

As you might expect, RMRFile offers integration with RMRZip, allowing files to be dragged and dropped into and out of Zip archives, although it isn't necessary to have RMRZip installed to do this. For more advanced operations, such as Zip creation and adding files




*Viewing the contents of two disks with RMRFile*

with password protection, you will need a registered copy of RMRZip.

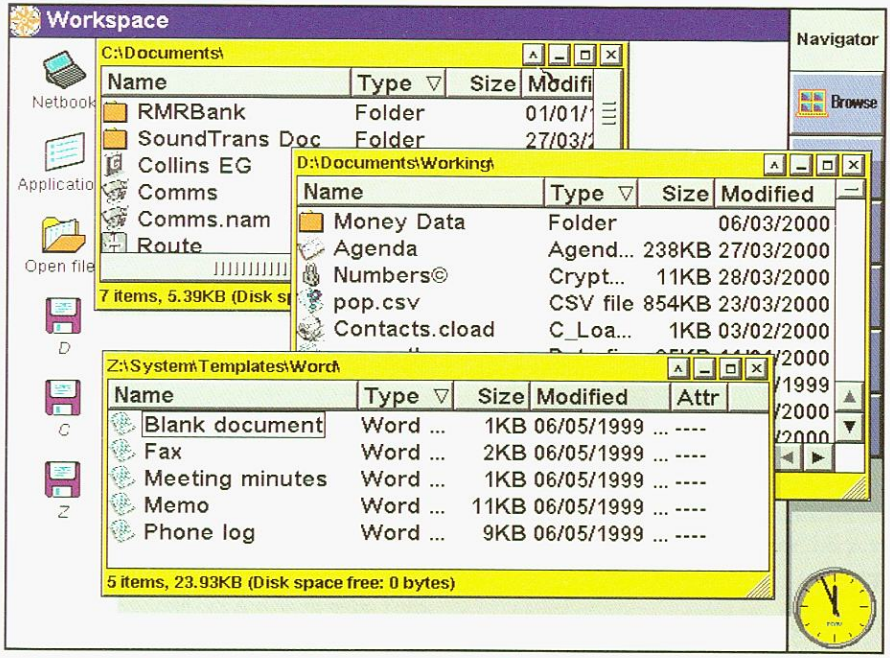
RMRFile automatically adjusts to suit differing screen sizes, but no use is made of colour and there's no Revo compatibility at present, though this is likely to be addressed in due course. Planned enhancements to the program include a hexadecimal file viewer.

## Navigator

Purple Software's commercial Navigator was fully reviewed in issue 18 and is rather more than just a file manager. In many ways it's more of an alternative user interface that happens to have file management and Zip archive handling built-in.

The heart of Navigator is a Microsoft Windows-like desktop called the 'Workspace'. Here you can create shortcuts to files, folders, disks and applications—launching a file is then just a case of tapping on the shortcut. A 'hotkey' can also be assigned to the shortcut, but some care should be taken to avoid conflicts with third-party applications like Macro5.

The Windows similarity even extends to the ability to open multiple 'browser' windows, which have (rather tiny) buttons for minimising, maximising and closing. These browsers are the key to Navigator's file management and allow the contents of any folder or disk (including the ROM) to be viewed, copied and moved around at will using the keyboard or stylus. Dragging a file from one disk or folder to another is impres-




*Navigator in full windowed glory on a Series 7*

sive, but multiple browsers do mean that the small screen of the Series 5 can get a bit crowded. On the larger screen of the Series 7 or netBook it works very well indeed.

Files can be filtered by type, which is useful when you have large numbers of them that you want to move, and the search options are extensive and speedy (the fastest of all those on test—see also the 'Needle in a haystack' feature on file finding utilities in issue 21). It's even possible to search *within* Zip archives, which is handy if you tend to store old stuff in zipped format to save space, as I do.

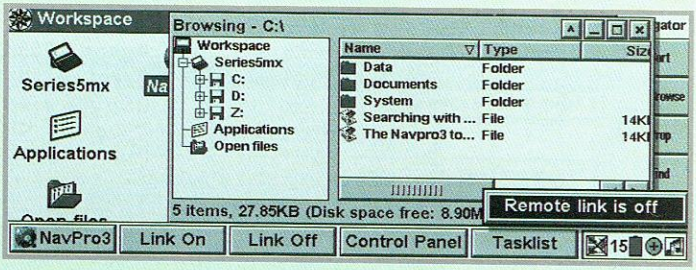
Navigator handles Zip files with aplomb. New Zip archives are easily created, and to add to them you simply use the stylus to drag files into the archive. Compression can be varied and a password added for extra security, although you'd be wise not to rely on it too much, as Zip passwords can be 'cracked' using special utilities on the Internet.

If you don't like EPOC's System screen you can even configure Navigator to *replace* it. Unfortunately, this does mean that some important System functions such as battery status and the Control panel are no longer instantly accessible. A workaround can be achieved by creating a shortcut to the System screen on Navigator's workspace, but it's less than ideal.

Navigator is a smart piece of programming and has been recently updated to include colour support. It benefits greatly from the power and larger screen of the Series 7 and netBook.

## Navigator add-ons

NavPro3 and PNPlus are independent Navigator add-ons that provide access to Remote link, Control panel and battery status. Both are designed to be invoked via shortcuts on Navigator's desktop. NavPro3 adds extras such as a memory defragmenter and a shortcut manager, looking similar to the Windows taskbar with visual indication of link and battery status.



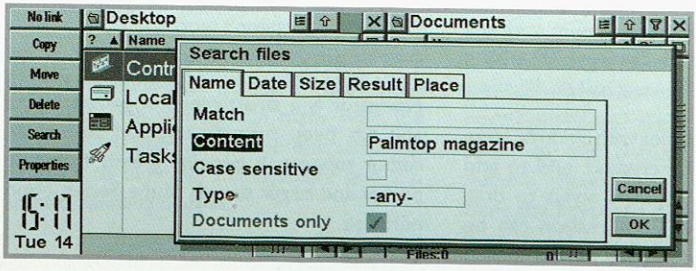

*NavPro 3, showing link and battery status*

## Filer

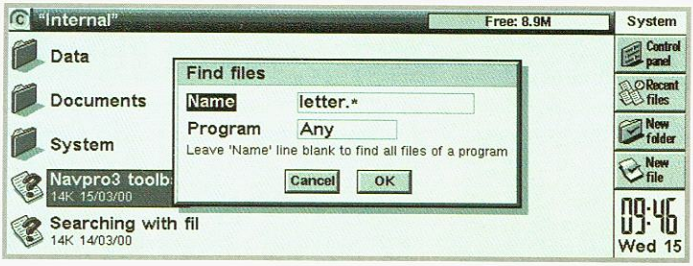
The shareware Filer is similar to RMRFile in appearance, function, and operation. Rather curiously, while drag and drop moving of files isn't possible, copying is. The searching options are on a par with Navigator and RMRFile, but I couldn't test this fully due to limitations imposed upon unregistered users.

I particularly liked Filer's direct access to the Control panel and Remote link. The toolbar can be swapped from right to left or turned off completely, and Filer can be conveniently sent to the background using [Shift]+[Ctrl]+[B]. Bringing it to the front again is done using a user-defined key combination. Sadly, Filer can't open or create Zip files.

Filer has the makings of a fine application, but it does feel rather unfinished in places. EPOC keystroke conventions are sometimes ignored, in that the tasklist is not available by tapping on the top of the toolbar, the find function is accessed by [Shift]+[Ctrl]+[S] rather than the more usual [Ctrl]+[F], and it inexplicably remapped many of the application icons on my netBook (although to be fair this isn't apparent on the 5mx). I found the poor help file, excessive nag screens and high registration fee a disappointing combination.




*Searching with Filer*




*The flexible 'Find files' utility as found on all 'ER5' machines*

## Others

There are at least two other file managers for EPOC: 3T and Commander. Both can be described as 'functional', with little by way of a graphical interface and correspondingly limited functionality. Commander also completely ignores EPOC conventions, making it rather unfriendly. In use, I found that they offered little real advantage over the built-in System screen.

## But why use a file manager?

The main advantages of an add-on file manager lie in helping you to search for and move files. Being able to view source and destination folders together makes life easier because

## File management utilities

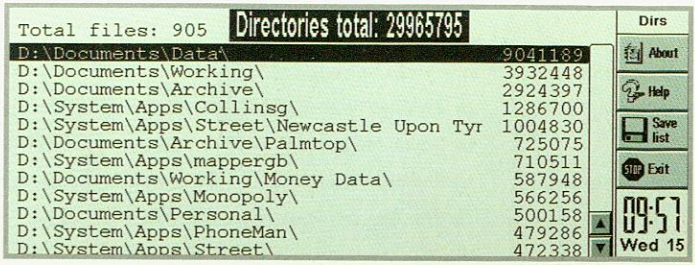
There are numerous compact utilities that help fill in some of the gaps in the file managers featured. Among the better ones (all available on the *Palmtop* CD) are:

**JB5Utils** searches for duplicate or temporary files, filters folders and files by size and finds any text string within any file. Available from *www.cix.co.uk/~jbsoft* .

**DirPrint** lists the contents of any or all folders on any disk. Results can be conveniently output to a text file. From *members.tripod.com/~RobertCL/dirprint.htm* .

**QV5** is a file viewer, designed to browse through folders, displaying each file in an appropriate viewer. From *www.cix.co.uk/~hzk* .

*JB5Utils—a fairly basic interface but some extremely useful tools*



it saves time-consuming navigation around folders and disks. Both Navigator and RMRFile are mature and usable, make good use of drag and drop operations and have superb search capabilities to help you find that elusive file. RMRFile is a good choice if you already own RMRZip, but if not then consider Navigator because it costs less than the two combined RMR Software offerings, yet offers similar functionality. Be warned that Navigator's own peculiar interface bears more resemblance to a Windows PC than EPOC, which may or may not suit your own personal preferences.

Both systems lack some of the really useful file management tools such as file viewers and editors, and I constantly found myself resorting to the standard System screen and utilities such as JB5Utils. Users of the 5mx/MC218, Revo and Series 7/netBook should also remember that a useful 'Find files' function is already built into the latest (ER5) version of EPOC.

PsiWin (or MacConnect) can also be used to organise files effectively—after all, it integrates the Psion's files and folders into your desktop system. As all operations take place over the remote link, things do tend to be somewhat slower, but it's still an eminently workable solution.

## Availability / references

Many of the applications and utilities mentioned here can also be found either on the *Palmtop* CD or at *www.epocsoftware.com* .

### EPOC

| | |
|---|---|
| **Navigator** | by Purple Software (£29.95) - *www.purplesoft.com* |
| **RMRFile** | by RMR Software (£15) - *www.rmrsoft.com* |
| **Filer** | by Thomas Nemec ($30) - *www.booki.com/psion* |
| **Commander** | by Ferenc Sarlós (free) - *www.finit.hu/private/sarlos* |
| **3T** | by Roger Muggleton (free) - *www.cix.co.uk/~hzk* |

### Series 3

The 3c and 3mx come with a very competent file manager (called Files), so the need for anything else is questionable. For Series 3a and Siena users there are quite a few options available. Issue 4 covered some of them in detail, so I'll only mention them in passing. My favourite is Purple Software's File Manager. It's by far the best and is quite sophisticated.

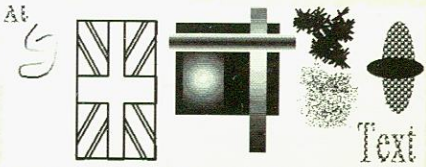
| | |
|---|---|
| **File Manager** | by Purple Software (£29.95) - *www.purplesoft.com* |
| **Filer3** | by Thomas Nemec ($30) - *www.booki.com/psion* |
| **3T** | by Roger Muggleton (free) - *www.cix.co.uk/~hzk* |
| **X3Tree/SnFile** | by Richard Wakelin (£10) - *www.rwakelin.freeserve.co.uk/s3* |
| **JBTree** | by John Boyce (free) - *www.cix.co.uk/~jbsoft* |

# Getting along with RMRArt

*Steve Litchfield takes you on a whistle-stop tour of the leading EPOC image editor*

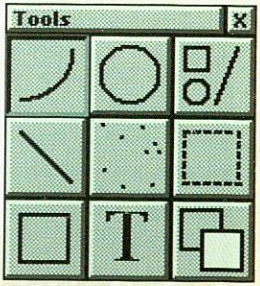
**You're probably already familiar with EPOC's Sketch application, built into all EPOC palmtops apart from the Revo. It's a surprisingly capable graphics utility, as we discussed in issue 17's 'Modern Art?' feature, but if you want to work in 16 greyscales (or better) or construct more ambitious images, it's time to switch to a third party application.**

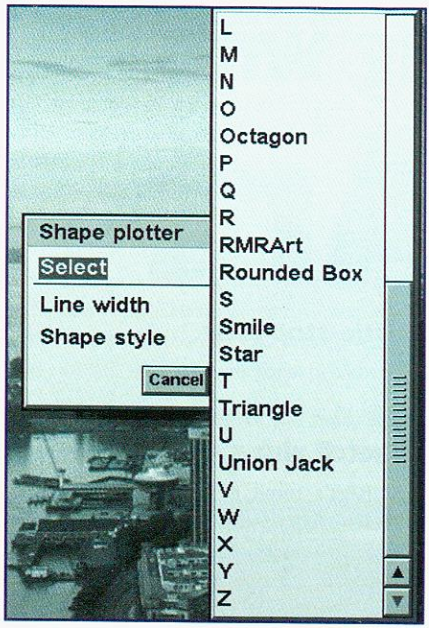
With the disappearance of support for Photo5, RMRArt is currently the only choice for serious EPOC artists, especially now that colour screens have arrived. Although (as we go to press) the release version of RMRArt is still restricted to 16 greyscales, a full colour-enabled version is being tested and should be available shortly. In fact, most of the screen images in this article were taken with the latest beta release.




## Sketch plus

RMRArt's remit is to provide as many of Sketch's functions as possible, extending them where necessary to 16 greyscales and then adding in a range of unique features of its own. The basic toolbox will look familiar, with continuous and straight line, box and ellipse, spray and text tools. Notice though that the toolbox itself is 'floating'. In other words, you can drag it around the screen if the default position gets in the way. Tapping on the 'Close' icon at the top-right minimises it down to a thin button at the bottom of the standard application toolbar. Each RMRArt tool has its own specific 'settings' dialog, always accessible with [Ctrl]+[H]






*A selection of predefined shapes, any of which can be stretched or scaled*

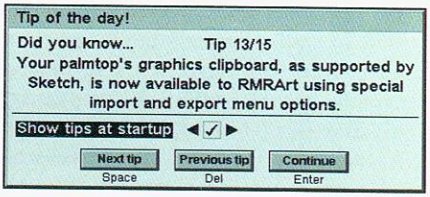
and offering controls relevant to the tool in question. For example, the box tool's settings include 'Content type', 'Pattern style', 'Shape style', 'Positioning', 'Line width' and a button for 'Gradients'. Each of the tools is intuitive to use and their settings dialogs fairly easy to follow (if in doubt at any stage, stick to the default settings for each parameter and experiment from there). To make your drawings precise if need be, there's a 'Snap to grid' function.

## Plotting shapes

Also on the floating toolbox (and of course on RMRArt's menu cards) are a few extras that deserve special attention. Top right is the 'Shape plotter' tool. A clever idea, this lets you drag out a predefined shape over an area of your image. If necessary, selecting 'Perfect' in the dialog forces the shape to keep its original aspect ratio, and upping the line width to '5' or more can be very effective in making the shapes stand out.

## Selections galore

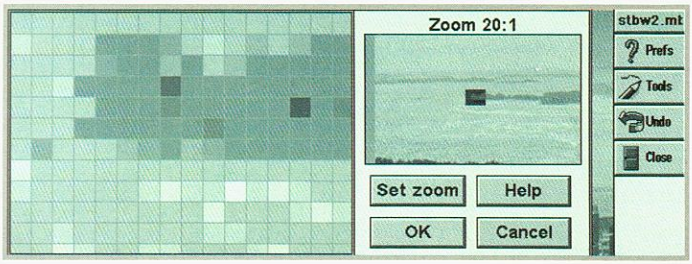
The remaining two tools are for selection and pasting. Working at first glance in a similar fashion to the same features in Sketch, RMRArt's version is a lot more useful for image work, as it doesn't require you to select 'Paste' every time you want to copy an area of pixels onto the canvas. Once part of an image is in the clipboard (by selecting it with the


Tip of the day!
Did you know... Tip 13/15
Your palmtop's graphics clipboard, as supported by Sketch, is now available to RMRArt using special import and export menu options.
Show tips at startup
Next tip
Space
Previous tip
Del
Continue
Enter

*A useful 'Tip of the day' feature, in addition to excellent help screens*

pen and choosing 'Copy'), the paste tool lets you place multiple copies wherever you like. This can be invaluable for quickly cloning an area of background, such as painting out an unsightly power line in a country scene.

The selection tool can also be useful for highlighting an area and designating it as a 'Floating selection'. This lifts it from the main image so it can then be kept out of the way while you work on other elements in the picture, finally dropping it back into place later on or exchanging it with the current clipboard contents. Think of this feature as a second, more visible, clipboard. Incidentally, you can import or export clipboard contents with Sketch using the commands under 'View | Clipboard'.




*Editing individual pixels at the default zoom level of 20:1*

## Colours and zooming

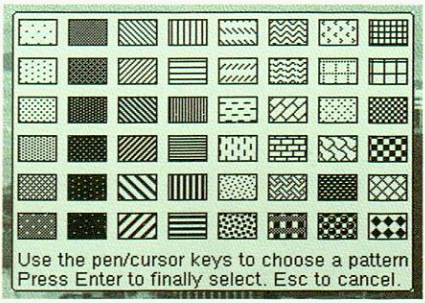
At all times in RMRArt, the left hand screen corners show the name of the currently selected tool (in case you've minimised or turned off the toolbox) and a box with the currently selected painting 'colour'. Tapping on the latter repeatedly will cycle through the colours (or shades) available, although avoid tapping too quickly as each new colour takes a second or so to appear. Once selected, all the main painting tools will draw in that colour.

The key to precise painting, especially on small palmtop screens, is a good zoom facility. RMRArt's is rather idiosyncratic and not particularly speedy, but it's usually up to the task. Before zooming, take care to use the selection tool to highlight the area of interest as otherwise you have to start at the very top-left of the image and page your way across. In the current version, you're limited to painting individual pixels in just black, white and light/dark grey, but I'd expect this to be expanded when the colour version of RMRArt is finally released. The level of zoom can be varied between 10x and 50x.

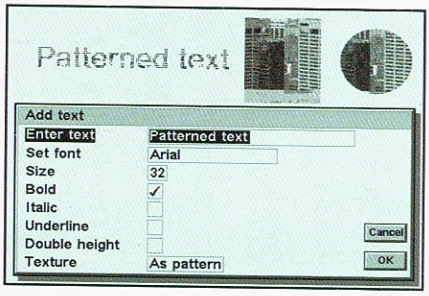
## Special effects

The 'Effects' menu card is somewhat basic, though still useful. 'Flip' is obvious and offers horizontal and vertical transposition of whatever area you have previously selected. 'Resize' works on the whole image and intelligently stretches or shrinks the picture in the horizontal and/or vertical directions, as required. 'Canvas size' acts to simply crop the current image to whatever pixel dimensions you need. 'Skew' acts to slant your image in either or both horizontal and vertical directions.

A number of RMRArt's features have obviously appeared through requests from users. If you've ever needed a thick, framing outline and have fiddled around with the box tool in an attempt to get to the extreme corners of an image, you'll appreciate 'Apply border'. Just select the colour and thickness and it's all done for you, including a psuedo-3D bevel effect if needed.




*The predefined pattern selection for fills and texturing*




*Patterns in action, here using image fragments from the clipboard*

Patterns are key to many of RMRArt's shape and text fills, drawing using shaped fragments of predefined images. A starter set of 48 basic patterns is provided, but it's often more useful to use parts from one of your own images instead, either from a file or from the RMRArt clipboard. It's a pity that the shape plotter can't also benefit from patterns.

If you've ever used a professional painting package on your desktop computer, you'll recognise many of the titles inside RMRArt's 'Module manager': Emboss, Mosaic, Thicken, Wobble and Disperse are all recognised image enhancements, implemented here as add-on modules. Some take a little while to run and may need to be left to do their stuff, perhaps disabling auto-off and leaving them processing while you drive to work, for example. Interestingly, RMRArt's main image printing function is also implemented as a module.

## Safety at work

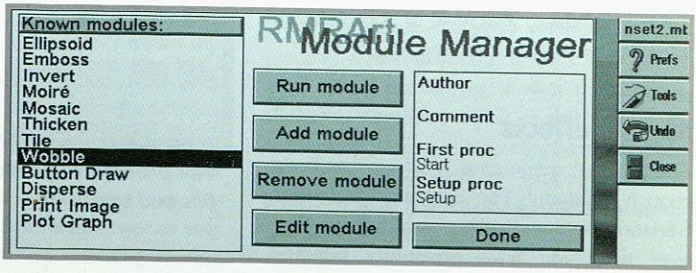
RMRArt is impressively robust. By default it allows up to 10 levels of 'Undo' and 'Redo', but if memory becomes low it automatically reduces these levels and tells you why it's doing so. Handling bitmapped images is memory-intensive in the extreme (especially if colour is involved) and so every bit of protection is very welcome. The program also auto-saves your work every 10 minutes and initiates an auto-recovery mode if RMRArt or your palmtop crash for any reason. I'd recommend an extra level of protection though, from personal experience. It's extraordinarily easy to make a complete mess of a picture without even trying, so make regular backups of your files and consider working on copies of your master images, replacing the latter only when you're happy with the results.

## Ambitious to the last

As with MBMView (see page 26), RMRArt works happily with multi-bitmap EPOC Picture files, as used in most applications. Although Sketch will fulfil 90 percent of a programmer's painting needs, RMRArt is an excellent standby tool to fill in when needed. If a multi-bitmap file is opened, a thumbnail view is presented and it's then easy to navigate to the required image and press [Enter].

The aims and ambitions of RMRArt leave me, a long-time EPOC programmer, quaking in

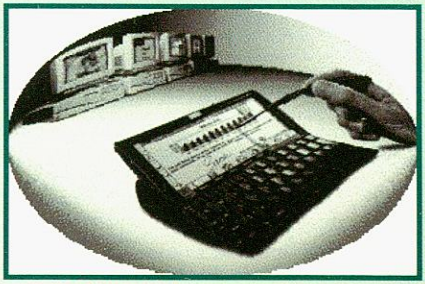
*Some of RMRArt's supplied add-on modules*



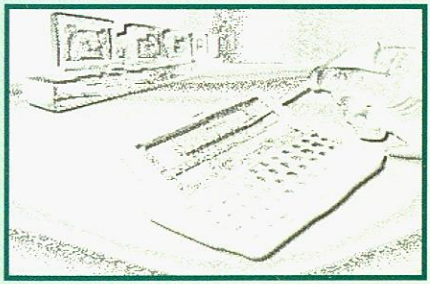
# RMRArt
# Special effects gallery

*The original image...*

*...and with the 'Skew' filter applied*

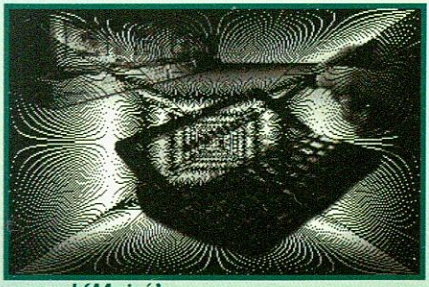


*...and 'Ellipsoid'*

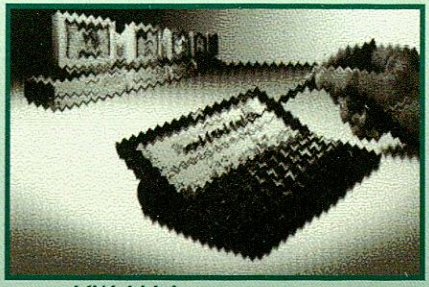


*...and 'Emboss'*

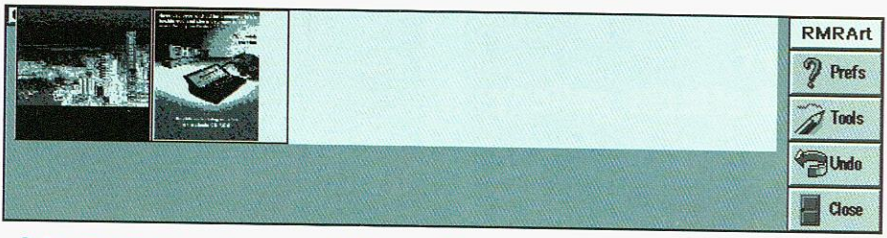
*...and 'Invert'*



*...and 'Moiré'*



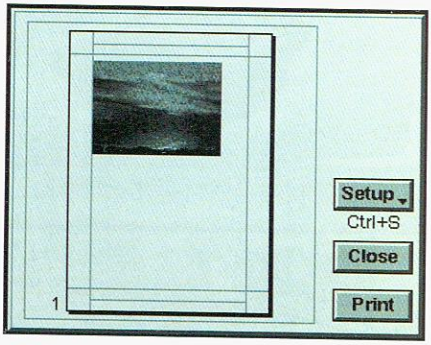
*...and 'Wobble'*



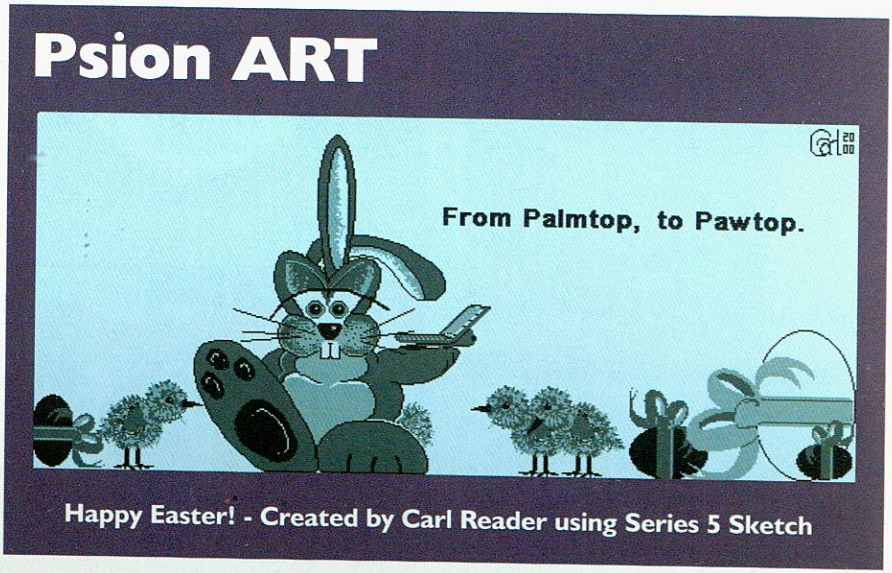

*Selecting an image from a multi-bitmap file*

my boots. In partnership with MBMView (see page 26), image-handling on your palmtop is very much a reality, with only a few minor caveats. As time goes on, if RMR pull off all their planned enhancements, the limitation will increasingly be your imagination rather than the technology.

A fully working evaluation copy of RMRArt can be downloaded from *www.rmrsoft.com*, and the program costs £12 to register.




*Printing implemented as a module, but still fully working*



# Inside the System folder

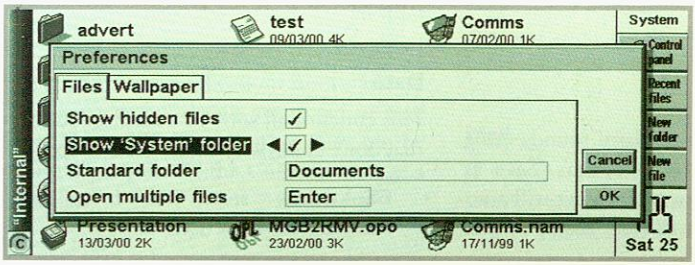
***Andrew Giddings gives a little insight into all those mysterious files and folders buried within every EPOC computer***

**Picture the scene: you turn on your EPOC palmtop one day, and press [Shift]+[Ctrl]+[K] to see how much free space the internal disk has left. The screen says 'Used 2469K' and a look of bewilderment and anguish crosses your face. "What?" you say to yourself, "I've only got three Word documents on there, and each one's smaller than 10K. What on earth is taking up all my space?"**

Don't despair, your palmtop is keeping something from you—a special, secret folder called 'System', where it stores all the files it doesn't want you to know about. In fact, you can see it for yourself, by using [Ctrl]+[K] on the System screen to invoke the Preferences dialog and ticking 'Show System folder'. Next time you look at the root (top level) folder of your internal disk (the C: drive), you'll see a new folder, wherein many of your palmtop's secrets are laid bare. If you're wondering what all those mysterious file and folder names are for, then read on.

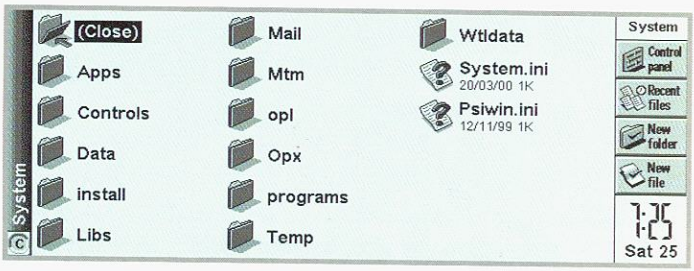
## Going inside

What's in the System folder depends on many things, including which model of palmtop you have. If it's a Series 5mx, 7, netBook, Revo or Ericsson MC218, it'll be running EPOC Release 5 (ER5); ER3 if it's a Series 5 'classic' with Message Suite, and ER4 if you're using an Oregon Scientific Osaris. It also




*Opening the door to the mysterious System folder...*

*The contents of a fairly typical System folder*




depends upon whether you've ever connected it to a PC via PsiWin and whether you've created your own alarm sounds and wall-papers. But mainly it depends upon what add-on programs you have installed. Here's a summary of what you might find:

### System.ini

This is a binary file which contains various system settings, including your System screen preferences and owner information. Don't touch this file or you'll lose the settings.

### Psiwin.ini

If you've ever connected your palmtop to a PC using PsiWin, this will automatically be created to store information about your connection settings. Again, you should leave this file alone.

### Wsini.ini

The \System\Data\wsini.ini file is a plain text file with a list of commands that are executed after a reset. For example, one of them starts up the System screen.

### Alarms

If you create your own alarm sounds using the built-in Record application's 'Save as alarm sound...' feature, this folder will automatically be created to store them. In fact, you can move sound files to and from this folder yourself, or rename them as you wish. The Revo has no sound recording facility, so you won't find this folder on a Revo.

### Apps

This is the big one. Every time you install a new piece of software it gets its own sub-folder in here to hold all of its program files, which in some cases can involve dozens of files and even sub-folders beneath it. Most applications also store their own 'Preferences' information in here too. This includes the built-in applications by the way: Word, Sheet, and even the System screen (in a sub-folder called 'Shell').

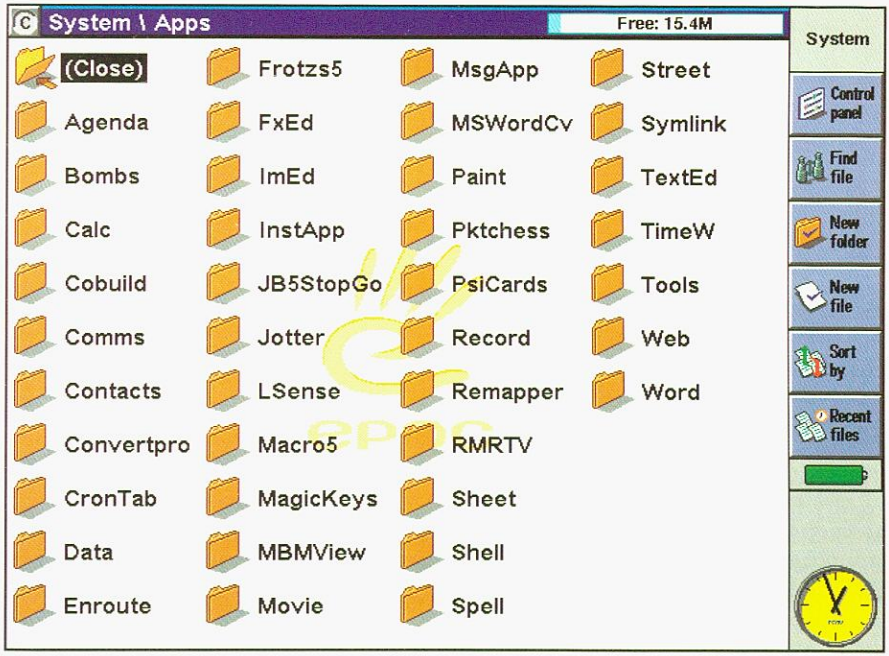
### Controls

This will automatically be created if necessary to hold any extra Control panel items you have added. On the Series 5, installing the EPOC Install utility (Instexe.exe) or Message Suite will create new entries in the Control panel. Under ER5 these are already built in.

### Data

This contains all sorts of miscellaneous files that don't fit anywhere else. For example:

- **Bookmarks** - stores Web's list of bookmarked web pages (ER5 only).




*A System\Apps folder, containing a generous number of third-party programs*

- **Clipboard.cbd** - when you 'Cut' or 'Copy' data to the clipboard, this is where it goes.
- **Contacts.cdb** - Contacts' database of names and addresses (ER5 only).
- **User.dic** - contains any words you have added to the built-in dictionary.
- **Commsdb.dat** - this is where your ISP settings are stored.

### Install

When you install applications from standard 'SIS' files, the full details are stored in here (also with a 'SIS' extension) so they can be uninstalled again via the Control panel at a later date.

### Java

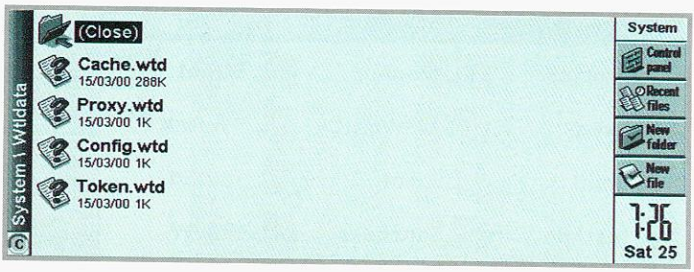
If you install the Java Runtime Environment (ER5 only), this folder is created to hold the system classes and properties (see also our 'Java!' introduction in issues 25 to 27).

### Libs

This holds any dynamic libraries that are needed by applications. These contain the code for resources that may be used by many different applications, such as Java and Web processing, and infrared communications.

### Mail

If you use Email, your mail messages and settings are put in here, stored in a maze of files and folders. Don't try to delete mail




*The \System\Web folder—often worth a little attention...*

messages manually though, as they're tied into a special index file which will become confused if you do.

### Mtm

This holds Mtm (Message Transfer Module) registry files which integrate features such as SMS into the email application. These should be left alone, otherwise you may cause Email problems.

### OPL

This holds OPL header files ('oph' files) for any OPL extension modules. Applications written in OPL often install these. (Some even store other shared files in here too).

### OPM

This holds translated OPL modules ('opm' files), sometimes loaded up and used by OPL applications.

### OPX

This holds the OPL extension modules themselves. These are specially compiled C++ procedures that extend the range of what OPL can do. Several add-on programs will automatically install various OPX files during installation, so take care not to delete anything from here unless you're *really* sure that no programs are using it.

### Printers

As you might expect, this is where extra printer drivers are stored. If you can identify any drivers for printer models that you never use, you can safely delete their associated files from this folder.

### Programs

Various EPOC executable programs are stored in here, such as the Java loaders.

### Recogs

This holds 'recognisers' that allow the System screen to identify various types of files and associate the correct icons and applications to them.

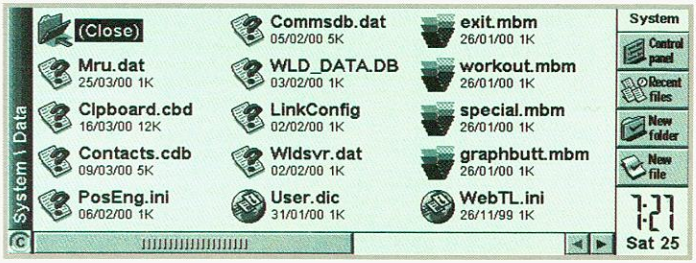
### Temp

If applications need to create short-term, temporary files, this is often where they're stored. They'll usually be deleted as soon as they're no longer needed, but if you find old files here (perhaps after an application has crashed or misbehaved), it's a good idea to delete them.

### Templates

Some applications (ER5 only) have the ability to create new documents based on templates: for example, Word has built-in templates for 'Fax', 'Meeting minutes', 'Memo' and 'Phone

*System's general data repository, often worth a browse...*




log'. If you create your own templates, they are stored in here, arranged in sub-folders according to the application. You can safely delete any files in here that you don't need.

### Wallpaper

Any System screen wallpaper pictures you install (again, ER5 only) will be stored in here as MBM files. You can freely add, move, rename or delete files in here.

### Wtldata

The ER5 Web application creates files in here for its own use. In particular, it creates a file called 'Cache.wtd', which holds local copies of files downloaded from the Internet. Although Web has an 'Empty cache on exit' option, it doesn't always seem to work. This file can therefore get very large, so you may periodically like to delete it from this folder after closing Web.

## Adding a CompactFlash disk

Once you start using CompactFlash (CF) disks, things get a little more complex, as there can then be a System folder on *every* disk, and some files will be stored in the CF's System folder instead of that of the internal disk. In general, when you install applications you can choose which disk to put them on ('C' for the internal disk or 'D' for the CF), and this determines where the application and its associated support files go. Some applications (such as Email and Contacts) also let you choose which disk to store their data on. Preferences files, by the way, are mostly stored on disk C, regardless of where the other files might be.

In fact, there's yet another System folder, in the ROM (the Read-Only Memory inside the palmtop—basically the microchip that holds the EPOC operating system). This is known as disk 'Z', and you can see it by pressing [Ctrl]+[Tab] (this doesn't work on the Revo) from the System screen and choosing 'Z' from the pop-up selector.

So what happens if you have the same files in more than one System folder? The answer is that files on D take precedence, then those on C, with any on Z taking effect last. This is actually very useful, as it means that you can override the built-in files by putting later versions on D or C, which is exactly what some of the EPOC system upgrades do.

## Spring cleaning

If you're desperate to reclaim disk space, you're probably keen to discover if there's anything more in the System folder that you can safely delete. Take care though, as you can do a lot of damage by removing the wrong files. Many files in the System folder are installed together with applications—to remove them, simply remove the application

from the Control panel in the usual way. You may also wish to look inside the 'Apps' folder to ensure that the program you've just removed has not left any stray files or folders behind.

Other main candidates for deletion are any files in the 'Temp' folder and Web's Internet cache (System\Wtldata\Cache.wtd). The beta version of the new Opera web browser also appears not to clear out its cache, but you can delete it from System\Apps\Opera\CACHE.

Another memory-saving option is to move files from the internal disk to a CF card. It's better to install things directly to the CF to start with, but you can also move most things there at a later date. In particular, all application folders within 'Apps' can be moved, with the exception of settings, preferences and registration files (typically with file extensions '.ini', '.set', '.reg', etc.) Files in 'Alarms', 'Install', 'Java', 'Libs', 'OPL', 'OPM', 'OPX', 'Printers', 'Recogs', 'Templates', and 'Wallpaper' can all be moved to corresponding folders on CF. If you do this then you shouldn't ever operate without the CF in place, as you'll be missing some of your vital system files. Also be aware that it takes slightly more power to write to a CF than to the internal drive, so there may be a slight impact on battery life.

If you're still desperate for space, many applications can do without their sound (.WVE) and help (.HLP) files, so have a look through your sub-folders of applications for any likely candidates.

By the way, even when you've set your System screen preference to display the System folder, many application file selectors will still hide it away. There's nothing you can do about this, other than move or copy files somewhere less secretive to work on.

# Life on the move

*Steve Clack offers a few travel tips to the Psion-owning road warrior*

**While it's obvious that Psion users should take their palmtops with them when travelling, not every 'road warrior' leaves home best prepared for computing on the move. Having been caught out more than once while on the move myself, here are a few pointers to help keep you running smoothly.**

## Battery planning

Although Series 3 and Series 5 users should usually plan to take an adequate supply of AA batteries if travelling to remote regions, the ubiquitous AA battery is available from all but the most exotic locations worldwide. Indeed, if travelling to North America you'll probably find them cheaper there than at home, and can save yourself having to pack extras.

When travelling, it's generally the little CR1620 or CR2032 backup batteries that you're likely to have trouble finding. They're tiny enough that there's little reason not to stash one (or even two) somewhere amongst your luggage. It's best to keep them stored in their protective packets until needed, to prevent them becoming accidentally discharged. If you do need to buy them on the move, pharmacists and watch shops are usually the best places to try.

If you're on a long plane or train journey, be sure to pack an extra pair of batteries in case the ones in your palmtop die mid-journey. There's nothing worse than settling down to write a detailed report on a 12 hour flight, only to find that your only spare batteries are tucked into a corner of your suitcase in the cargo hold.

If you're using a Revo then you'll need to plan much more carefully. Always give your Revo a full charge before setting out on a long journey, and recharge from the mains adaptor in your hotel room every night. Airports usually have a couple of mains sockets in the departure lounge, so you may be able to save the day with a quick recharge if you get caught out.

Series 7 and netBook users may not have enough battery life for the longest of journeys, so consider investing in a spare removable battery pack. Together with the standard pack you'll then get 15-20 hours of use—provided you remember to charge both packs fully

before setting out. You can squeeze more out of the packs by turning down the screen brightness, and to a lesser degree by saving files to the internal drive rather than CF disk.

## Backups, backups, backups

Often neglected while on the move. If your palmtop is lost or stolen there's little you can do (short of taking a spare machine with you), but if your palmtop contains data that's vital to your travels, such as hotel bookings and itinerary information, you really should consider some kind of contingency plans. Here are a few options:

- Print out copies of any data that you *really* can't do without, and tuck them into a corner of your luggage, just in case. Don't leave this in the same place as your palmtop, as losing one through theft or disaster will usually involve losing them both.
- If you have lots of important files that you can't realistically make hard copies of, consider buying a spare CompactFlash and put copies of your vital files on it. Again, be sure to keep the backup disk in a different location to the main computer at all times. A spare CF is also the easiest way to make backups of the work you do while you're actually travelling. Without such backups anything you create while away from base is always in danger of being lost.
- If you're travelling on business, you may well have access to a PC at your destination. Many people are understandably reticent to let you install software onto their computer, but if you travel with a disk containing a backup of your important data plus a PsiWin CD and cable, you can always ask permission if you get in a fix. You'll probably only fit a minimal collection of your most important files onto a couple of floppy disks, but Zip drives are common enough these days that it doesn't hurt to keep a complete backup with you on a single Zip disk.
- If you have email access while travelling, you can send copies of important files to yourself (perhaps at a different email address), then leave them on the ISP's server as backup copies. This can be a cheap and effective solution unless you're creating lots of large files.

These precautions may seem excessive, but losing vital files while on a business trip can spell disaster, so be sure to take whatever precautions are appropriate for you. Always assume that the worst thing that can happen is for your Psion to be lost or stolen, or damaged beyond repair. In some countries you may be able to buy a replacement machine right away, or even get a faulty or damaged one repaired, but that's not always the case.

## Hard copy

A portable printer can be immensely useful while travelling, but it's all additional baggage. If you just need an occasional printout then consider using the built-in Message Suite to fax documents to yourself at your hotel. If going into an office environment virtually every department will have an HP Laserjet-compatible printer with a parallel port, so if you take a parallel print link along then you may be able to make use of that.

Unless you're planning on really heavy usage or a very long trip, it's usually best to leave your mains adaptor at home, and rely on battery power. If you've got a Revo, Series 7 or netBook then you've got no choice, but be sure that your adaptor operates at the local voltage and that you have a suitable adaptor for the mains socket. Happy travels.

# COLOURIZE your applications

## *A programmer's guide to updating your OPL/32 programs to take advantage of the 256 colour screen of the Series 7 and netBook*

*By Al Richey & Andy Waller of RMR Software*

**The arrival of the Series 7 and netBook onto the EPOC scene has meant that many users now expect all their third-party applications to support colour. We at RMR Software have spent the last few weeks amending many of our programs to make full use of this new facility. However, what we thought would be a relatively trivial exercise turned out to be quite protracted. The purpose of this article is to highlight the problem areas we found and hopefully to help other software authors avoid the same pitfalls. We should emphasise that this covers only the practical side of the operation—we wouldn't presume to recommend any colour schemes for applications. At RMR we have made the decision to make *every* colour option user-configurable as we know in advance that any colour we choose will not be to everyone's liking!**

To support colours there are three things you need to do: first, produce a coloured icon for the AIF file; next, produce a coloured MBM file with all the toolbar icons and other graphics for the program; and finally, add colour support into the actual program. And this is where we hit our first problem. It turns out that coloured AIF and MBM files are *not* usable on earlier machines that have Symbian's EPOC Release 3 (ER3) software as their Operating System (the original Series 5 and the Geofox One). The icon on the Extras bar just shows as a question mark, and any attempt to load bitmaps from the MBM file causes a 'Not supported' error. Ideally there would be some way of checking the machine type from the SIS file, so that only the appropriate files were installed. Unfortunately at the moment this is not possible, so following discussions with the team at Symbian we have concluded that there are two suitable solutions. The first is to have two separate versions of the program: one colour and one greyscale; the second is to install both sets of graphics files and then, the first time the program is run, delete those that are not required. To make configuration control easier we have opted for the second method. It makes for a larger SIS file but doesn't affect the size of the final installed version.

The other point to remember is that not all ER5 machines support colour (Series 5mx, Revo and Ericsson MC 218) and it is very wasteful on memory space and battery life to run a program in colour mode if colour is unavailable. So you need some way of sensing whether colour is supported and adjusting things accordingly.

## Producing coloured AIF and MBM files

For those familiar with creating black and white AIF and MBM files using Symbian's BMCONV DOS utility there are no real surprises, and the process is essentially the same. However, make sure that you have the latest (currently 270K in size) version that supports ER5 and colour.

Unless you originally had the foresight to create your master program and toolbar icons in colour, then you will need to spend some time colourizing your black and white images (or black, white and two greys to be more precise). We did this on the master Windows BMP format files using the excellent shareware PaintShop Pro on a PC, but any similar paint package can be used. You can use all your artistic flair here, though we tried to be consistent with the style and colour of the icons of the built-in apps so that they would be familiar to users, and not appear over-coloured or garish.

Trial and error was initially needed to determine the best method for obtaining the required range of colours. Most of the program and toolbar icons of the built-in applications use between six and 16 colours, but these are not the same 16 colours across all icons, and not the 16 default colours available in EPOC, but from the full 256 colour palette the ER5 machines support. In order to match this it is necessary to convert the original grey icon to a 16 million colour palette to give you a full spectrum to work with, and then reduce it back down to 16 after colourizing. If using Paint Shop Pro you can decrease the colour depth with the 'optimised median cut' and 'nearest colour' options. This ensures that you don't force the icon colours to map back to the nearest of the 16 basic Windows (and EPOC) colours, so icons can retain their different colour schemes.

Repeat the process for the three sizes of program icons (48x48, 32x32 and 24x24 pixels) and then recreate the black and white masks for each. This ensures that each mask perfectly matches the recoloured icon, in case you have changed the shape or outline in any way, and will ensure that any screen background or wallpaper 'shows through' the program icon in the right way.

Then use BMCONV to create the MBM to be used for the AIF file. Investigations determined the most appropriate parameters for the 'make' text file to be:

```
<progname>C.mbm
/c8icon48.bmp
icon48m.bmp
/c8icon32.bmp
icon32m.bmp
/c8icon24.bmp
icon24m.bmp
```

This creates the MBM using the /c8 option for the coloured icons to give eight bits per pixel/256 colours, and using the default option for the two colour (black and white) icon masks which have the 'm' suffix. Don't use the /c4 option in BMCONV as this converts the colours back to the nearest of the 16 in the basic fixed EPOC colour palette, which is not what you want to do after all your painstaking colourizing.

The same process is followed exactly to create the toolbar icons and other graphics for the program's main MBM file. Pay particular attention to getting the black and white masks correct for the 24 pixel toolbar icons. Any errors here show up horribly on a colour machine, and you can no longer get away with using the icon image as the mask.

## Checking whether colour is supported

Unfortunately, there doesn't seem to be a direct way of checking for colour support on ER3 machines other than by trying it and noting if an error occurs. So we used the method recommended by Symbian that is contained in their knowledgebase and which suggests having the following procedure added to your code:

```
PROC ColourAvailable%:
  LOCAL Cinfo&(7)
  ONERR Cerror::
  gCOLORINFO Cinfo&()
  IF Cinfo&(gColorInfoANumColors%)
    RETURN Ktrue%  : REM An ER5 machine that supports colour
  ENDIF
  RETURN Kfalse%  : REM An ER5 machine that doesn't support colour
  Cerror::
  ONERR OFF
  IF ERR=-96  : RETURN Kfalse% : ENDIF
  REM An ER3 machine that does not support colour
  RAISE ERR
ENDP
```

Now, in the initialisation routine for your program, before you try to load any bitmaps from the MBM file you need to insert some code along the lines of:

```
IF ColourAvailable%:
  Delete the 'normal' <Progname>.aif and <Progname>.mbm files
  Rename the <Progname>.acl and <Progname>.mcl files to
  <Progname>.aif and <Progname>.mbm respectively
ELSE
  Delete the coloured <Progname>.acl and <Progname>.mcl files
ENDIF
```

This will ensure that the resultant <Progname>.aif and <Progname>.mbm files are the correct ones for the machine on which the program is running.

You can also use this procedure to ensure all colour commands are used only if appropriate. In particular, when using gCREATE to create a graphics window you need to make sure that the colour flag is set to the correct number. We do this by using :

```
Screen%=gCREATE (x%,y%,Width%,height%,Visible%,1-3*ColourAvailable%:)
```

This selects four-greyscale mode for b/w machines and 16-colour mode for colour machines.

Also, any colour-related configuration settings should not be shown on non-colour machines. For example, you could use:

```
IF ColourAvailable%:
  dCHOICE C%,"Colour ","Black,Red,Green,Yellow,Blue,Magenta,Cyan,White"
ENDIF
```

At this point you should now have two new MBM colour files, one for the program AIF and another for the MBM. It's best to give them different names to avoid confusion with the black and white ER3 files when building them into the SIS package. We use '<Progname>.mbm' for b/w MBM and '<Progname>.mcl' for the coloured MBM version, that being the extension recommended by Symbian. We do the same for the AIF files, using '<Progname>.aif' and '<Progname>.acl'.

Finally, it's worth mentioning a couple of tips and pitfalls for checking the coloured MBM files. You can of course complete everything, assign the files to the program (see the following coding steps) and install it on a colour machine to see how they look. For those without access to a Series 7/netBook the PC emulator can be used, though beware that the colour representation differs somewhat from the EPOC screen.

To help us view and check our own colour files we developed a small utility for viewing MBM files. This has three functions for displaying the six icons of the AIF MBM individually and overlaid as they will be in the system screen, to view the contents of MBM files sequentially and to assign MBM images and masks to an eight button toolbar. If any authors would like a copy, feel free to email us at *support@rmrsoft.com*.

## Adding colour support to the program

In theory this is simply done using:

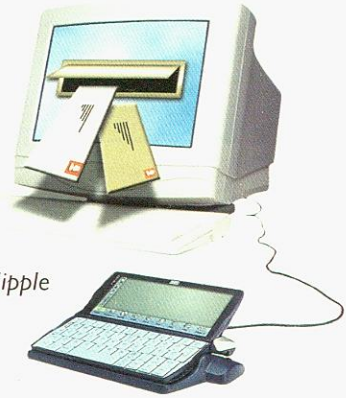
```
gCOLOR red%,green%,blue%
```

to change the colour of the graphical operations. However, we found out that working out these 3 values is not a trivial task. So we made the decision to go for just the eight colours shown in the `dCHOICE` dialog on the previous page, and then we adapted a procedure from the OPL SDK Graphics section (called `SetColor:`, slightly more generic than we needed and supporting more colours). So we added the following procedure to our programs:

```
PROC Colour:(C%)
  LOCAL H&,Red%,Green%,Blue%,Colour&(8)
  IF ColourAvailable%:=Kfalse% OR C%<1 OR C%>8
    RETURN
  ENDIF
  Colour&(1)=$000000 : Colour&(2)=&FF0000 : Colour&(3)=$000000 : Colour&(4)=&FF0000
  Colour&(5)=$000000 : Colour&(6)=&FF0000 : Colour&(7)=$000000 : Colour&(8)=&FF0000
  H&=Colour&(C%)
  Red%=H&/&10000 AND &FF : Green%=H&/&100 AND &FF : Blue%=H& AND &FF
  gCOLOR Red%, Green%, Blue%
ENDP
```

So now whenever you want to change colour, simply calling this procedure does the task. Calling `Colour%:(1)` sets it back to Black. Note that by doing the `ColourAvailable%:` check on line 2 you avoid having to do this check each time within the program and this procedure can be called directly from a grey-scale machine without any concerns.

# Email in depth



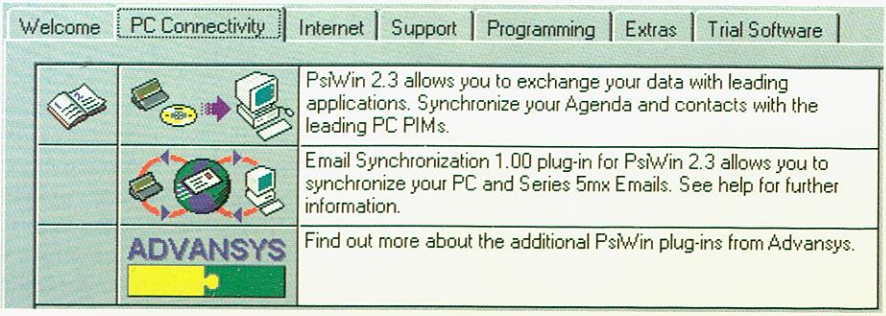
***EPOC's built-in email software is both powerful and flexible. In this second part of a three part series we look at working in tandem with a desktop email system***

*by Pete Sipple*

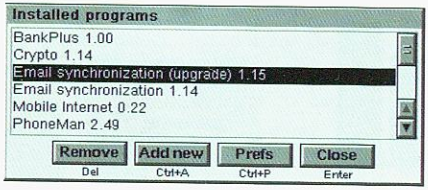
## Synchronizing email

Email synchronization made its appearance with version 2.3 of PsiWin and only works with ER5 machines, such as the Series 5mx, Revo, Series 7, etc. It allows you to read, reply to and archive emails on both your desktop and palmtop, keeping the contents of both Inboxes up-to-date. At present, it is possible to synchronize with the following PC desktop email packages:

- **Microsoft Outlook** 97 and 98 (but *not* Outlook Express). Although not officially supported, Email Sync appears to work quite happily with Outlook 2000.
- **Lotus cc:Mail** 6 and 8, as long as you are using a cc:Mail 8 Post Office.
- **Novell GroupWise** 5.x or **Qualcomm Eudora Pro** 4.x (using a third-party solution, eSync, available from Australia-based Advansys, *www.advansyscorp.com*).
- **Lotus Notes** 5 (using InSync Pro (e) and the PsiWin 2.3 patch available from *www.psion.com*).


Welcome
PC Connectivity
Internet
Support
Programming
Extras
Trial Software
PsiWin 2.3 allows you to exchange your data with leading applications. Synchronize your Agenda and contacts with the leading PC PIMs.
Email Synchronization 1.00 plug-in for PsiWin 2.3 allows you to synchronize your PC and Series 5mx Emails. See help for further information.
ADVANSYS
Find out more about the additional PsiWin plug-ins from Advansys.

*Installing Email Sync on a desktop PC*




*Be sure to add the 1.1 patch...*

To start synchronizing, you'll need to install the Email Sync software found on the PsiWin 2.3 CD. A word of warning though: the first release was notoriously unreliable and you are strongly advised to install the Email synchronization v1.1 patch, available for download from *www.psion.com*. Setting up your first sync is straightforward, but if you need a detailed walk-through of the procedure, you'll find some excellent documentation on the PsiWin CD in the '\Extras\Support\Series 5mx 7 & Revo' folder.

Before running your first sync, take a look in the 'Advanced' settings, three of which are worthy of particular note:

- Synchronizing attachments. To save filling your palmtop with large and often unreadable attachments, either uncheck this option or set the maximum size to something sensible, such as 50K.
- Just sync the last 5 days worth of messages. Unless you need to carry your entire Inbox around with you, this is another useful space-saver.
- If you need to sync copies of messages that you've sent, tick the 'Inbox, Outbox, Drafts and Sent' option.

Finally, it's important to note that the Inbox, Outbox, Drafts and Sent folders are the only ones that you can sync between PC and Psion, if you have emails stored in custom folders, they won't be copied.

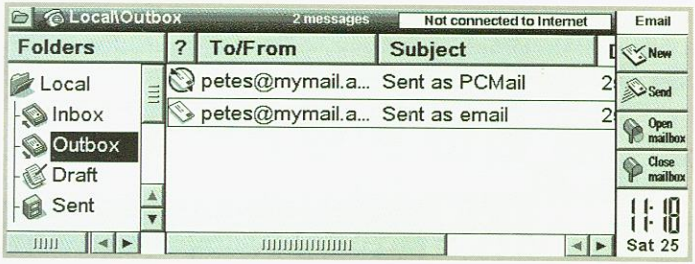
## PCmail

This handy new feature allows you to compose a message on the move, save it on your Psion, and then send it from your PC's Outbox after email synchronization.

*Creating a PCmail on the Revo*

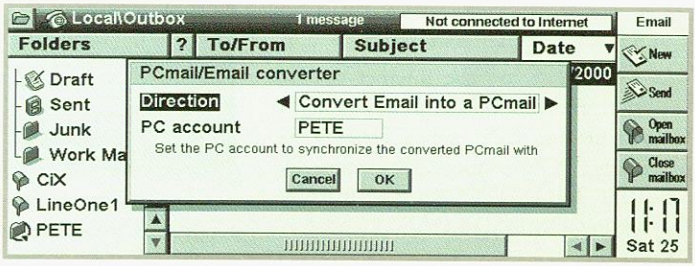
### More fault finding

In the last issue, I listed some useful logging features to help diagnose connection problems. Since then, my attention has been drawn to another little-known feature. From the System screen, create the folder C:\Logs\Etel\. After an online connection, useful logs appear that will help diagnose your Internet connection. 'Etel', incidentally, is the part of ER5 that handles EPOC telephony. Thanks to JG for bringing this to my attention.




*A PCmail and a 'normal' email message in the Outbox. Note the different icons*

*Converting a PCmail in order to send it directly from your palmtop*




To get PCmail up and running, you first have to perform a standard email synchronization as detailed above. This allows the Email program on the palmtop to add an account to its folder list, ready for the first PCmail. Once installed, some new menu commands appear, notably 'Create new PCmail' on the 'Message' menu card. Creating an email with this option places a message in the Outbox with a new icon, indicating that it won't be sent from your palmtop, but will be sent from the PC when you next connect. In the event that you can't wait any longer and you can't get to your PC, you can always use the 'PCmail/Email converter' command to change the message type and send it directly from your palmtop.

## IMAP

Short for **I**nternet **M**essage **A**ccess **P**rotocol, the current version (IMAP4) is broadly similar in concept to POP3, the protocol used to download your email from an ISP's server. IMAP4 offers several advantages over POP3 which are especially relevant to the mobile traveller. It allows you to scan through your emails at the server's end, reading part of a large message before deciding whether or not to download the entire thing—handy for large messages with attachments, as well as for manipulating mailboxes and folders online. At present, only a few email programs support IMAP, and EPOC's Email is one that doesn't, although it will apparently be implemented in the future. Few ISPs offer IMAP4 support as standard, so despite the benefits, it looks like POP3 may be with us for some time yet.

For more details on IMAP, see *www.imap.org* .

An important point worth noting is that if a PCmail is moved to a different folder for any reason, it *won't* be synchronized. Users of cc:Mail should also note that an idiosyncrasy in the program means that PCmails in your palmtop's Inbox will end up in a 'From Psion Inbox' folder at the cc:Mail end. They just need to be moved manually to the normal Inbox folder.

## Backing up your settings

Your ISP details and the Internet options you select in Control panel are stored in the C:\System\Data folder. On a Series 5 (or other early EPOC palmtop), they are in a file called ISP_DB.DAT. On an ER5 machine, they are in COMMSDB.DAT.

Email settings and the messages themselves are stored in separate folders for each mail service you have added to your palmtop. On an early EPOC system, the folders are in C:\System\Messages, on an ER5 system, they're in C:\System\Mail.

In the final instalment of this article in the next issue, we'll look at file attachments, tips on how to speed up and automate your text entry, plus a short guide to general email protocols and 'netiquette'.

### New to email?

If you're new to email and find the contents of this article too advanced, you'll find a more basic introduction to Internet connectivity in our 'How to connect your Psion to the Internet' series in issues 17-20 of *Palmtop*.

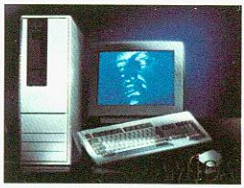
## *Can I access web-based email from my Psion?*

Especially popular with mobile users and world travellers, web-based email services allow you to read your email from anywhere in the world without an email program—any computer with an Internet connection and web browser should be enough. Probably the most common free 'webmail' service is that run by Hotmail. Psion's own Web application can't access certain web sites, including Hotmail, as it lacks support for JavaScript and SSL (required for secure web connections). The latest version of Opera (see page 29) *does* meet Hotmail's requirements though. If you tend not to travel overseas too often, you may find that the easiest thing to do is set up an Internet account with one of the many low cost or free ISPs, picking up your normal POP3 email and sending outgoing (SMTP) email using the local ISP's mail server.

*www.hotmail.com*

*www.opera.com/epoc*

# The Amiga connection



*Richard Smedley looks at how to connect your Psion to an Amiga computer*

**In recent years desktop computing has become almost completely dominated by the PC and Macintosh, leaving owners of other computers such as the Amiga feeling left out in the cold. Even though the Amiga is less popular than it was a few years ago, it is still a very capable computer which is quite usable for downloading programs from the Internet or browsing the Palmtop CD. Perhaps the biggest problem faced by Amiga owners is the lack of software support. While PC users have PsiWin and Mac owners can use MacConnect for connecting their Psion, the only equivalent program for the Amiga is AmigaNCP.**

Unfortunately, advanced features like synchronization, which PsiWin users take for granted, are impossible to achieve on the Amiga. But with a little know-how it is possible to transfer files between your Amiga and Psion, allowing you to use the Amiga for downloading and installing EPOC programs. Converting data between Amiga and EPOC formats is more difficult because of the lack of conversion software for the Amiga, but with a little bit of ingenuity it is at least possible to convert text and graphics between the two formats.

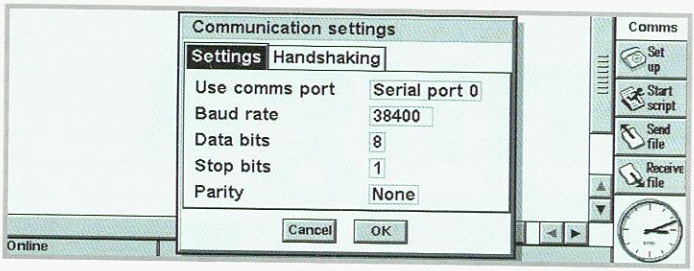
## Getting connected

All EPOC machines are supplied with a special serial (RS232) cable for connecting them to printers or desktop computers. A closer examination of this lead reveals our first problem: the connector on the Psion serial cable is different to the one on the Amiga serial port. You will therefore need to buy a standard 9-pin to 25-pin serial adaptor to connect them together. These are available from any good computer or electronics shop for less than £10.

Having physically connected the two machines together, we can now take a closer look at the software side.

## AmigaNCP networking

The nearest Amiga equivalent to PsiWin or MacConnect is Oliver Wagner's AmigaNCP, released by VaporWare. AmigaNCP is an implementation of Psion's networking protocol, giving the Amiga full access to all the files and directories on your Psion. This




*Setting up the necessary preferences in 'Comms' on your EPOC device...*

allows you to treat the Psion as though it is just another disk drive connected to the Amiga, making it possible to copy files between the two by simply dragging-and-dropping them from the Amiga's Workbench.

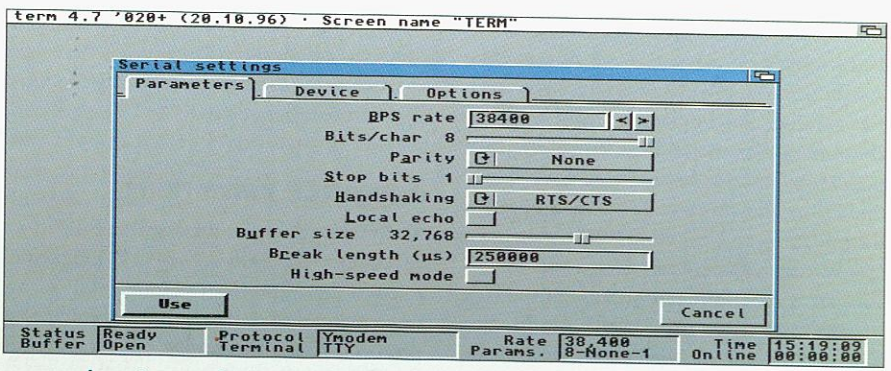
The original versions of AmigaNCP could only be used with the Series 3, but Vapor-Ware have recently released an updated version which is also compatible with EPOC machines. While AmigaNCP is an excellent tool for transferring files between your Amiga and Psion, it still offers no file conversions of any kind. For occasional users or those on a limited budget, a much cheaper alternative option is to use a terminal emulator for transferring your files.

## Terminal issues

With the notable exception of the Revo, all EPOC palmtops are supplied with a built-in Comms (terminal emulator) application. This can be used in conjunction with a suitable terminal emulator on the Amiga to transfer files from one machine to the other.

Setting up the Comms application on the EPOC device is very easy, and involves only a few changes to the default settings. Run it by tapping the 'Comms' icon on your Extras bar, and then enter the following settings:

- Select 'Terminal emulation' [Shift]-[Ctrl]+[E] from the 'Tools' menu. Set 'Terminal to emulate' as 'TTY' and tap on 'OK' to save this setting.




*...and setting up the necessary communication protocols on your Amiga*

- Go to 'Communication settings' [Ctrl]+[K] from the 'Tools' menu. Select the 'Settings' tab, and choose the following values:

  | | |
  |---|---|
  | Baud rate: | 38400 |
  | Data bits: | 8 |
  | Stop bits: | 1 |
  | Parity: | None |

- Select the 'Handshaking' tab and set the following:

  | | |
  |---|---|
  | XON/XOFF: | off |
  | CTS/RTS: | on |
  | DSR/DTR: | off |
  | DCD: | off |

That is all there is to it—the Comms application is now ready for use.

Before transferring files between the Amiga and Psion, it's necessary to configure a suitable communications program on the Amiga. One of the best is *Term* by Olaf 'Olsen' Barthel, which can be downloaded from Aminet (see the Download section at the end of this article). You will need to download and install both 'term-main.lha' and 'term-libs.lha'. The huge range of settings and options in *Term* might seem bewildering at first, but this high level of configurability is what makes the program so useful.

Setting up *Term* for use with EPOC is not as difficult as it might appear, because we only need to make a few changes to the default settings:

- Select 'Settings | Serial...' from the menu, and click on the 'Parameters' tab. Enter the following settings:

  | | |
  |---|---|
  | BPS rate: | 38400 |
  | Bits per char: | 8 |
  | Parity: | None |
  | Stop bits: | 1 |
  | Handshaking: | RTS/CTS |

- Select 'Settings | Terminal...' from the menu, and click on the 'Emulation' tab. Set the 'Emulation' to 'TTY', to match your EPOC device.

- Select 'Settings | Emulation...' from the menu, and click on the 'Options' tab. Set 'Terminal identifies' as 'VT200'.

- Select 'Settings | Transfer protocols...' from the menu, and click on the 'Default protocol' tab. Enter the following settings:

  | | |
  |---|---|
  | Type: | XPR library |
  | Name: | xprymodem.library |

  Now tap the 'Edit settings' button, then the button labelled 'Ymodem batch' and turn on all three tick boxes.

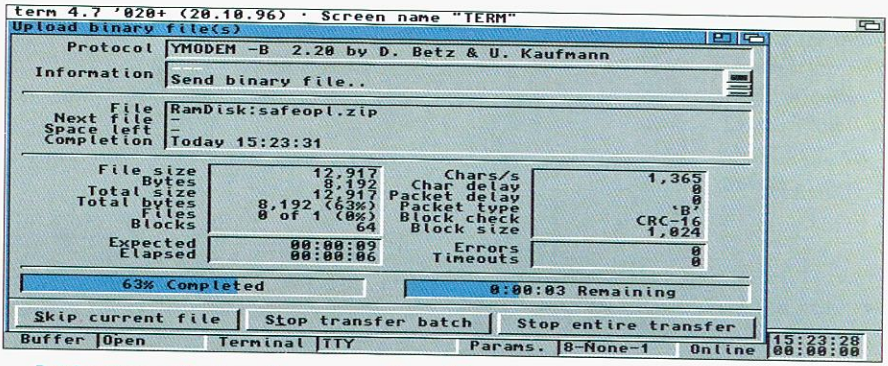
Make sure you remember to save your settings after you have entered everything.

Once you have got everything working properly you can experiment with increasing the baud rate so that files are transferred more quickly. It is extremely important to make sure you enter the same baud rate on both computers, otherwise it will not work. Some older Amigas might not be able to cope with higher baud rates, so if you find that you can't transfer files reliably then you will need to reset it to a slower speed.

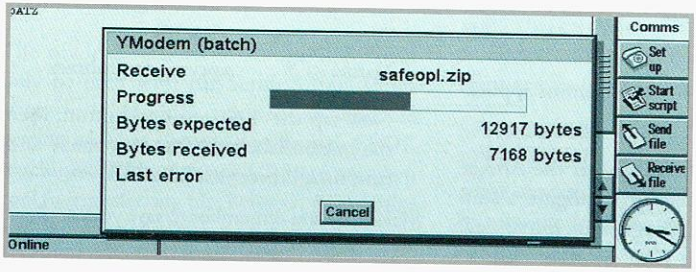
## Transferring files

To perform a file transfer, connect the serial cable between the two computers and then ensure that both Comms and Term are running.

Amiga-EPOC transfers are very easy: select 'Transf. | Upload binary file...' from the menu




*Performing a file transfer, as seen from 'Term' on the Amiga...*

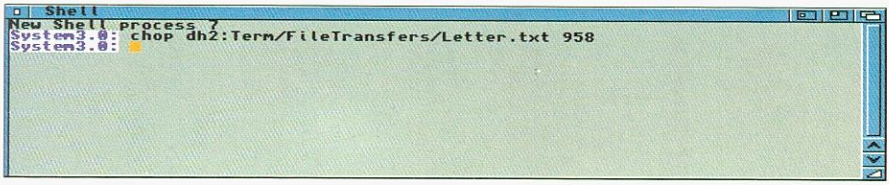



*...And as seen from the EPOC side*

in Term, and use the file requester to select the file that you want to transfer onto your Psion. Now select 'Receive file...' [Ctrl]+[R] in Comms and make sure 'Ymodem (batch)' is selected as the transfer protocol. A copy of the selected file should now appear on your Psion.

EPOC-Amiga transfers are a little more complicated because of a slight problem with how file transfer protocols are handled on the Amiga. Start by selecting 'Send file...' [Ctrl]+[X] in Comms on the palmtop and choosing the file you want to transfer. Again, you need to make sure that the transfer protocol is set to 'Ymodem (batch)'. Now select 'Transf. | Download binary file...' in Term, and the file will be transferred onto your Amiga. However, this time there is a small problem: if you compare the size of the file on your Amiga against its original size on the Psion, you will see that it has grown—this is a side-effect of how file transfer protocols work. The file is transferred from one machine to the other by splitting it down into smaller blocks, each of which consists of 1024 bytes of data. The transfer protocol can only send full blocks of data, so the very last block has to be padded out to exactly 1024 bytes by adding 'null' bytes to the end of the file. When you are transferring files onto the Psion these additional bytes are automatically removed for you, but on the Amiga you have to remove them manually.

Chop is a small CLI command for the Amiga which allows you to restore files to their original length by manually chopping off these additional bytes. To use it, open a CLI window and type:




*'Chop'ping a file...*

'Chop <filename> <original_filesize>' (you will need to do this manually for every file that you transfer from your Psion to the Amiga).

If you need to transfer several files, Serge Shestopalov's RMRZip is invaluable and will save you a huge amount of work. Instead of transferring all your files over to the Amiga one at a time and manually chopping each one, you can archive them together into a single ZIP file. Now all you have to do is transfer and chop the one file, and then unzip it again on the Amiga to restore all the original files.

## Installing SIS files

The majority of EPOC software is now supplied as SIS files. These are special self-installing archives which automatically put all the required files into the correct folders on your Psion. EPOC Release 5 machines like the Series 5mx can run SIS files by simply transferring the file onto your Psion and tapping on its icon. Older EPOC machines like the original Series 5 usually relied on PsiWin to install them.

Luckily Psion have released a patch for pre-ER5 machines called AddRemove by Ian Fogg and Velma Allen, which allows these older machines to run SIS files without having to rely on PsiWin. To install the patch, copy the file 'instexe.exe' from the *Palmtop* CD into the root directory of your Psion and run it.

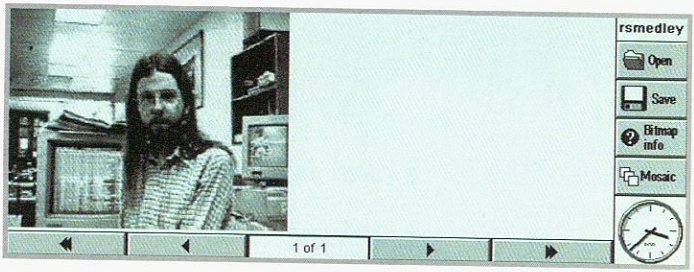
## Converting data

Unfortunately, the lack of conversion software for the Amiga means that many of the EPOC file formats like Data and Sheet are impossible to use on the Amiga, but with one or two limitations text and graphics can be converted between the two machines.

The built-in Word word processor can load and save ASCII text files using the 'File | More | Import text file...' and 'File | More | Export as text file...' functions. These need to be PC-style ASCII files, with no line breaks and CRLF paragraph breaks. All good word processors on the Amiga will have options allowing you to load and save ASCII files in this format, so this shouldn't pose any problems. Unfortunately the major limitation of using ASCII files is that most of your text formatting (bold, italics, etc.) will be lost during the conversion. This is not as bad as it sounds, because you can still use your Psion for composing text while you are on the move, and then add all the formatting after you have transferred it into your Amiga word processor.

Graphics are much easier to convert, thanks to the excellent shareware program MBMView, as reviewed on page 26. MBMView is a picture viewer which can load and save files in a wide variety of formats (including Sketch,

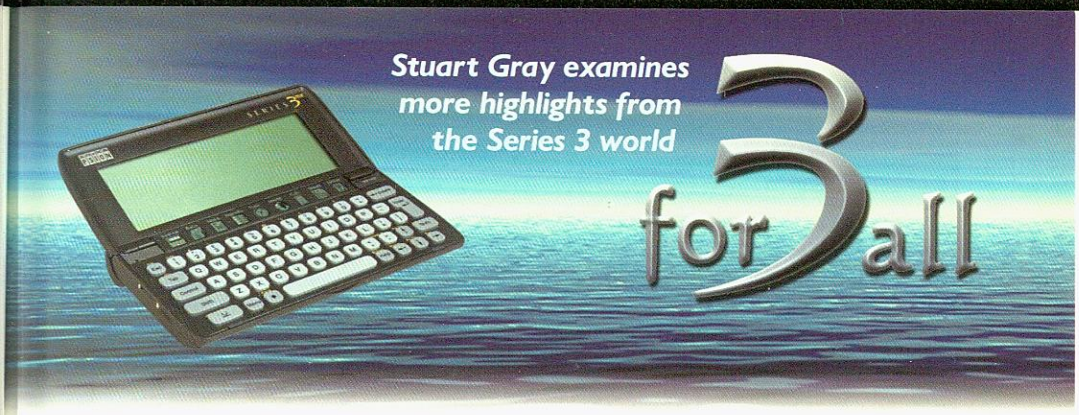
*A photo that has been scanned in on an Amiga and then imported to EPOC*




MBM, GIF and JPEG), allowing you to use it as a file convertor between native EPOC formats and standard picture formats (such as GIF). Most good art packages for the Amiga can work with GIF files, easily enabling you to exchange graphics between the two machines. Even if your art package doesn't support GIF, there are several programs on the Aminet FTP site (see below) which can convert GIF files into AmigaIFF format.

## Availability / references

| | |
|---|---|
| AmigaNCP (Amiga) | *www.vapor.com* |
| Aminet | *ftp://de.aminet.net* |
| Term (Amiga) | *ftp://de.aminet.net/aminet/comms/term/term-main.lha*<br>*ftp://de.aminet.net/aminet/comms/term/term-libs.lha* |
| Chop (Amiga) | *www.cix.co.uk/~rsmedley/amiga* |
| AddRemove (EPOC) | *library\msgsuite\msgsuite_english\inst_te.exe* (on Palmtop CD) |
| RMRZip (EPOC) | *www.rmrsoft.com* |
| MBMView (EPOC) | *ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/platodva/psion.html* |



*Stuart Gray examines more highlights from the Series 3 world*

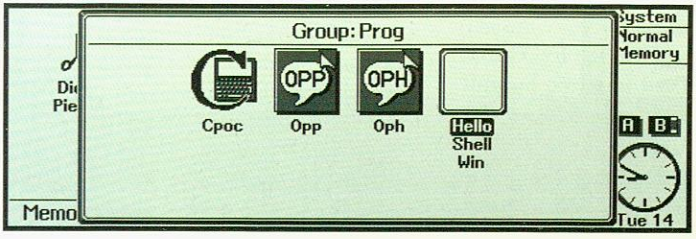
# for 3 all

**Things have been quiet on the Series 3 scene recently, with only a few updates to existing shareware programs being released over the past few months. Mindful of this, I thought it would be a good time to round up the various programming options available for the Series 3 platform.**

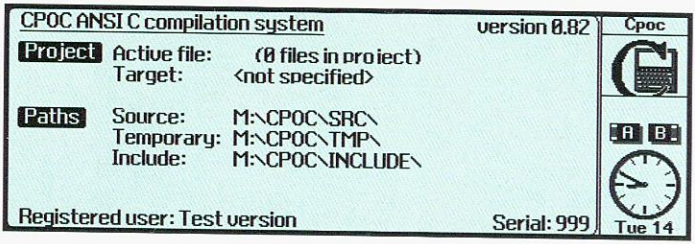
## OPL variants

The most obvious is of course OPL, built into all models. This is a straightforward language, related more in many ways to Pascal than to BASIC. The structure is logical and the syntax (the command words) helpfully descriptive. *Palmtop* has featured tutorials for OPL since its very beginnings, so I won't attempt to go into detail here. It has been used for well over 90 percent of the shareware applications available and many programmers use nothing else. It's free, universal, and can be used any time, anywhere.

There *are* limitations however, not least of which are the Series 3's relatively small screen and keyboard, which make the building of long code modules tedious. OPL also lacks a number of features from other languages. Enter OPP, from Neuon (bought from Twiddlebit). This is a pre-processor for OPL, allowing similar functionality to C, with arrays and structures. Several program files can also be combined to form the final application, which has several benefits. Firstly, a shorter component file is easier to manage on the Psion, since it takes less time to scroll through the text and fits inside the 32K size limit for individual OPL files; secondly, if you plan to write several programs, there are certain common tasks (such as checking for the presence and location of a directory or file) which would be more or less identical in each. These tasks can therefore be written once in individual files and included by OPP when the main application is built. Another advantage is that once an individual file has




*OPP and SCIII both use the familiar Program editor interface*

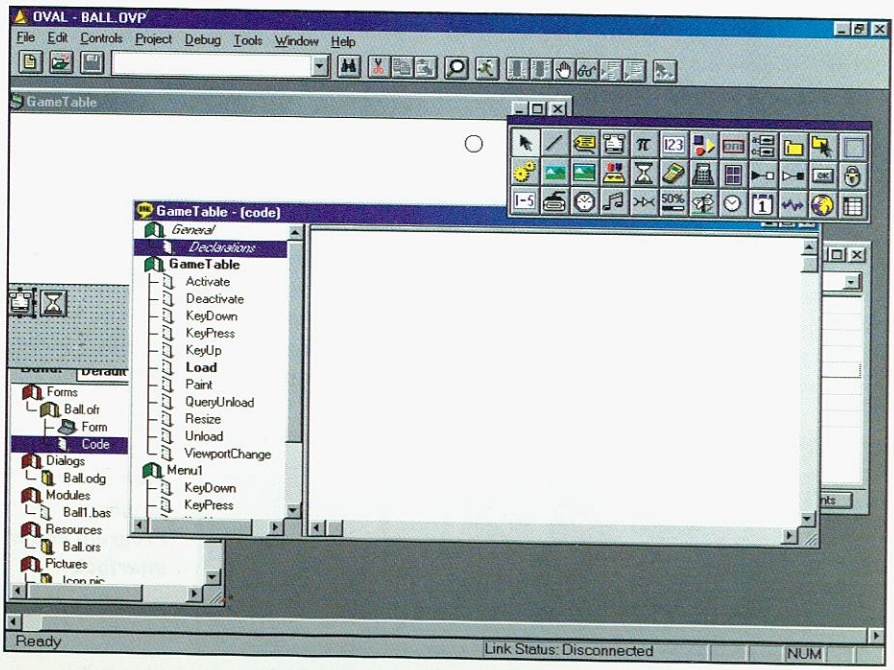


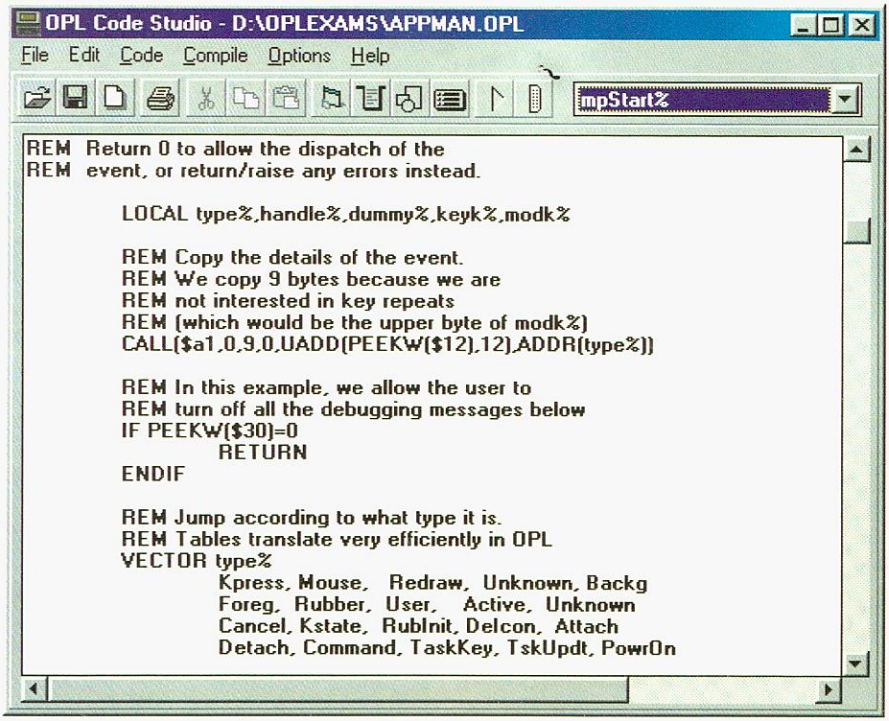

*CPOC, a good concept in need of a little polishing*

been error-checked, it can be largely ignored and other sources of error more easily tracked down. OPP is also available in a PC version.

If you prefer colour screens and large keyboards when programming, Jonathan Fisher's OPL Code Studio is good value. Running under Windows, it provides a convenient OPL editor and compiler, and more. Dialog boxes, menu cards and graphics can all be built using simple tools, which then generate the necessary OPL code to reproduce them on the Psion. Once the program has been finished and translated, OPL Code Studio uses PsiWin to upload the application.

Also relevant, though probably only available second-hand, is ODE (OPL Development Environment). Hosted under Windows, it offers a project manager, a multi-file source code editor, OPL translators and context-sensitive help. It also communicates directly with the Series 3.




OPL Code Studio - D:\OPLEXAMS\APPMAN.OPL
File Edit Code Compile Options Help
mpStart%
REM Return 0 to allow the dispatch of the
REM event, or return/raise any errors instead.
LOCAL type%,handle%,dummy%,keyk%,modk%
REM Copy the details of the event.
REM We copy 9 bytes because we are
REM not interested in key repeats
REM (which would be the upper byte of modk%)
CALL($a1,0,9,0,UADD(PEEKW($12),12),ADDR(type%))
REM In this example, we allow the user to
REM turn off all the debugging messages below
IF PEEKW($30)=0
RETURN
ENDIF
REM Jump according to what type it is.
REM Tables translate very efficiently in OPL
VECTOR type%
Kpress, Mouse, Redraw, Unknown, Backg
Foreg, Rubber, User, Active, Unknown
Cancel, Kstate, RubInit, Delcon, Attach
Detach, Command, TaskKey, TskUpdt, PowrOn

## C languages

'C' is probably the most widely used computer language today: it is efficient, available for more or less every major operating system, and taught throughout the world. It is also very powerful, allowing fine control of the hardware and systems of its target machines. Not surprisingly then, the majority of the built-in applications on the Psion Series 3 are written in C. The full Software Development Kit (SDK) is available for anyone to buy, and comprises the C compiler, a software debugging tool and four volumes of documentation, which detail everything from the correct commands for producing a dialog box to the physical connections for the serial port. The C SDK runs under DOS on a PC, with the debugger connecting to the Psion via a PsiWin serial cable.

For those who wish to write C on the Psion itself, there are two packages available. The first, CPOC, will currently check the code for errors and it is eventually intended that it should compile programs entirely on the Psion. However, development has been slow recently and now that the 3mx has been discontinued it may not be finished at all.

The other version is SCIII, based on the DOS Small C compiler. This will compile straightforward programs but lacks some advanced features. Of the two, Small C is the easier to use, following the conventions of the OPL editor. Neither really match the power and flexibility of the SDK though.

## OVAL

When the Series 3c was introduced, Psion brought out a new programming system designed to appeal to people already used to Visual Basic. Called OVAL (Object-based Visual Application Language), it is completely code-compatible with version 3 of the Microsoft product and features the same drag-and-drop approach to application building. This revolves around the user interface: you drag and drop screen items (such as editing fields, buttons, clocks, etc.) onto a representation of a Psion screen, then you write code for each element.

For example, you could have an application which used a file selector dialog. Within OVAL it is very straightforward to drop a file selection field onto a dialog, along with 'OK' and 'Cancel' buttons. The code associated with the buttons would then pass the highlighted file name to the main program.

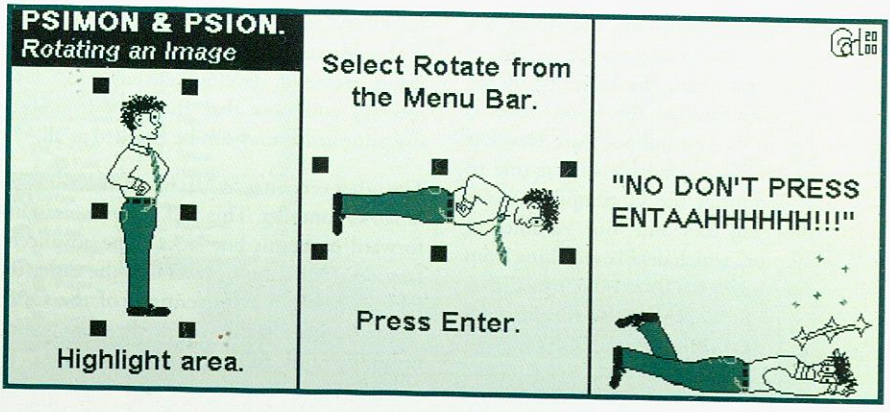
There is obviously a great deal more to OVAL than this. It does make programming as straightforward as it can be and the compatibility with Visual Basic can reduce the learning curve and allow easy porting from Windows (with obvious caveats). OVAL is still technically available at around £90, although you might do better to try and find a copy second-hand.

## In conclusion

One of the greatest strengths of the Psion palmtops is the ease with which their functionality can be extended. It was a stroke of genius to include a programming language into the machine, something most other palmtops sorely lack. Although most users do not write their own programs, many do. Given the wide range of options available, why not give it a go?

### Availability

Much of the software mentioned in this article is included both on the Palmtop CD and the CD that comes with Leigh Edward's 'Programming Psion Computers' book (ISBN 0-9530663-0-4), along with many examples and documents to help programmers of all abilities.



# Working for a Living:

# The Lecturer

***John Woodthorpe passes on software tips and general advice from his experiences using a Psion palmtop to help deliver lectures an presentations***

**Whether giving presentations in a business context, lectures in education or preaching sermons, the person delivering the message should be keen to get their message across. It's all about transferring information from the speaker's mind to those of the listeners.**

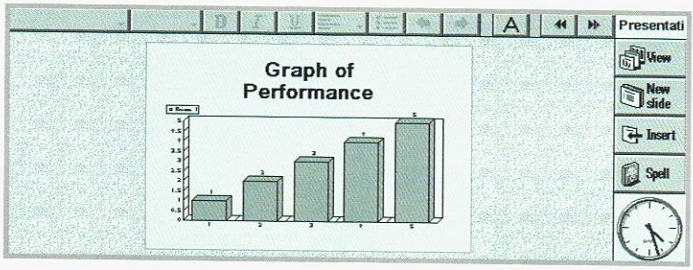
Anyone who has lectured or presented will be familiar with the glazed look that sometimes descends upon an audience that's lost interest. Alternatively, you may have seen the look that says "open my head and pour in knowledge, but don't make me work too hard to understand what you say".

Every audience provides its own challenge, and it's up to the speaker to rise to it and make the transfer of information as effective as possible without overloading the listeners. There are all sorts of techniques and aids the speaker can use, but it's certain that as a palmtop owner you'll want to make full use of it to make your work easier.

## Giving the presentation

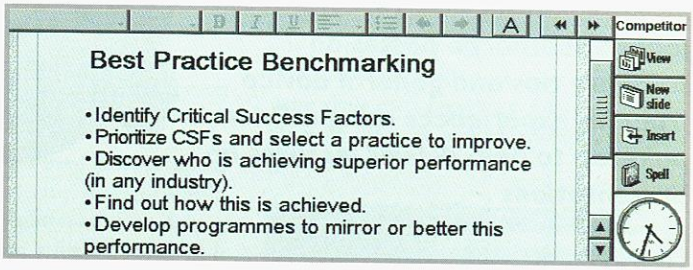
Psion's Presentation Maker was covered in issue 15 and is the obvious application to use. As far as it goes Presentation Maker is fine—it's just that it doesn't really go far enough. It also takes a remarkably long time to load even a simple presentation. It can be used to create presentations from scratch and even as an idea outliner in the 'brainstorming' stage when planning a presentation. However, it's not a lot of use for serious work unless you have a PC running both PsiWin and Microsoft PowerPoint, as that's the only convenient way to get things out of the program. Without these ancillaries you'll have to print slides directly using EPOC's rudimentary printing system, though this may be adequate if your needs are simple.

Sadly, it isn't possible to project 'slides' directly from Presentation Maker, although the now-defunct Geofox One could do this with Colorshow (reviewed in issue 19). This was effectively a read-only version of Presenta-



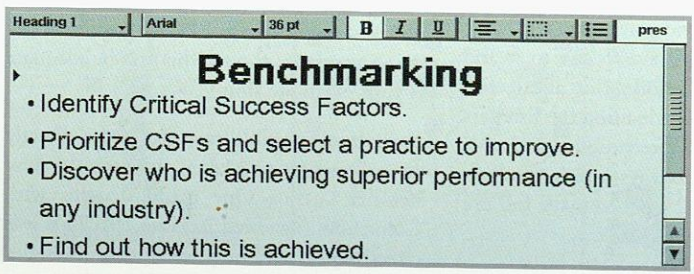

*Presentation Maker, showing a graph...*

*...and a bulleted list*


Best Practice Benchmarking
• Identify Critical Success Factors.
• Prioritize CSFs and select a practice to improve.
• Discover who is achieving superior performance (in any industry).
• Find out how this is achieved.
• Develop programmes to mirror or better this performance.
Competitor
View
New slide
Insert
Spell

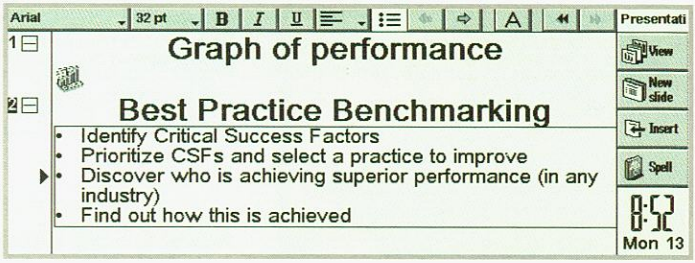
tion Maker, a PC-card VGA adaptor and suitable software drivers, designed to interface with VGA-compatible projectors. Now that the Series 7 and netBook have a colour VGA screen and PC-card compatibility, all we need are the drivers. There are suggestions that Psion may release a comparable hardware and software package to allow appropriately-written applications to provide VGA output, though it probably won't produce the direct image of the Series 7's screen that many people would wish for.

The Psion's built-in word processor is very flexible and useful here, and I've prepared and printed many presentations onto Over-Head Projector transparencies over the years, mostly from my Series 3a. All it needs is a template with appropriate fonts and styles. This can be a true template (as seen in the Series 3 range and the ER5 version of Word on the Series 5mx and compatibles), or just a blank file that you use as a starting point. It's true that you can't embed pictures in the Series 3 version, but most presentations are heavily text-based and it's still satisfying to be able to produce a few extra overheads during




*Using a Word file to draft a presentation*

*Working with Presentation Maker in outline mode*

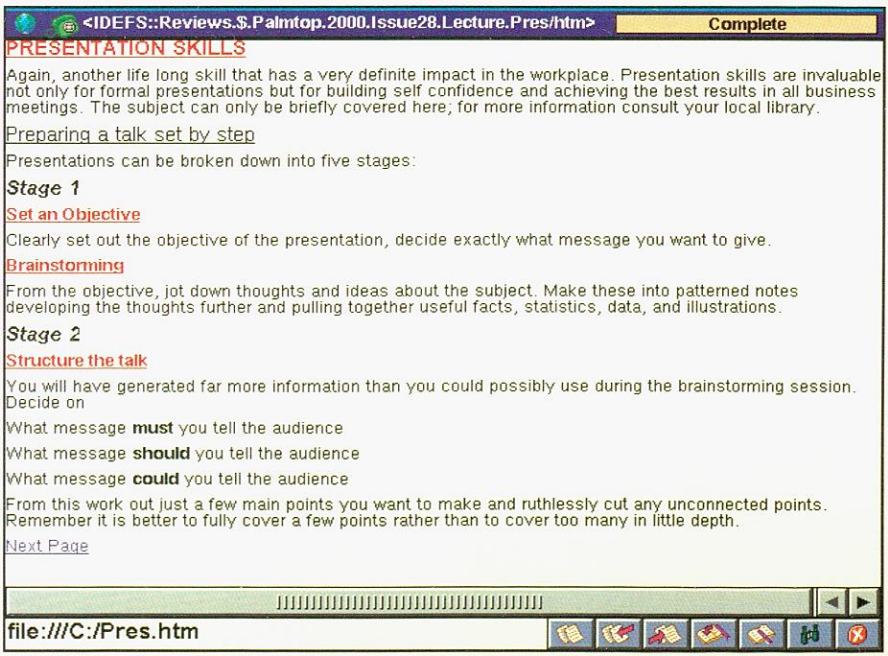



a meeting, print them out onto transparencies and put them on a projector to summarise the discussions.

It's also important to rough out notes as well as to prepare the actual presentation material. Packages such as Presentation Maker, Word (especially with the Outline feature in the Series 3 or EPOC ER5, etc.), Jotter (again on the Series 3c/3mx or ER5, etc.), Notepad Deluxe (see issue 22), and Brainstormer (part of MindTools, reviewed in issue 25) can all be used to help in the idea generation and development process.

## During the presentation

As you're likely to have your palmtop with you while delivering a talk, there are several


<IDEFS::Reviews.$.Palmtop.2000.Issue28.Lecture.Pres/htm>
Complete
PRESENTATION SKILLS
Again, another life long skill that has a very definite impact in the workplace. Presentation skills are invaluable not only for formal presentations but for building self confidence and achieving the best results in all business meetings. The subject can only be briefly covered here; for more information consult your local library.
Preparing a talk set by step
Presentations can be broken down into five stages:
Stage 1
Set an Objective
Clearly set out the objective of the presentation, decide exactly what message you want to give.
Brainstorming
From the objective, jot down thoughts and ideas about the subject. Make these into patterned notes developing the thoughts further and pulling together useful facts, statistics, data, and illustrations.
Stage 2
Structure the talk
You will have generated far more information than you could possibly use during the brainstorming session. Decide on
What message must you tell the audience
What message should you tell the audience
What message could you tell the audience
From this work out just a few main points you want to make and ruthlessly cut any unconnected points. Remember it is better to fully cover a few points rather than to cover too many in little depth.
Next Page
file:///C:/Pres.htm

*The Web application can be used to view HTML notes on a presentation*

uses it can be put to. The most obvious is to use the large clock display in the Time application or one of the countdown timer programs to make sure you know how much time you have left to complete your presentation. This becomes more useful if you extend or disable the automatic switch off timer to make sure the palmtop stays on for the entire duration of the talk.

The other major use is to display notes that you can refer to during the presentation. A Word file is the simplest method, although it can be inconvenient to constantly keep scrolling up and down the page. A better way is to use VReader5 (see issue 23) to scroll through the notes by tapping the spacebar. The Series 3 Reader application (also discussed in issue 23) can be set to scroll automatically at a fixed rate, enabling a Psion to become a simple auto-cue device. The new EBook (see page 15) application for EPOC will scroll whenever the screen is tapped, and is a useful alternative.

You can also convert your whole presentation into HTML format on a desktop computer and then keep it on your Psion to rehearse beforehand (and perhaps use on the day) in the built-in Web application.

As a final tip, the standard Series 5 stylus makes quite a good pointer to indicate ideas you want to emphasise as you stand next to an OHP.

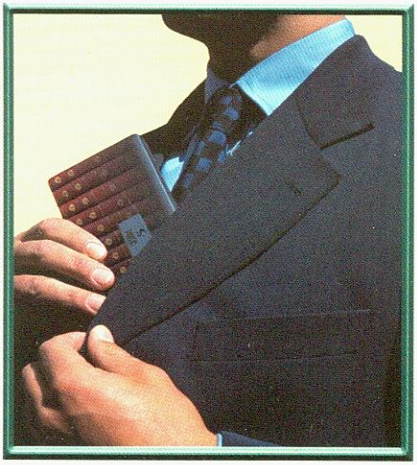
If you do use your palmtop to help in the delivery of the lecture or presentation, remember that even the best behaved computer can fall victim to Sod's Law, that fundamental tenet of human life that says "If something can go wrong, it will, and it will pick the most inconvenient time to do so"—and crash or flatten its batteries. In other words, use the technology, but don't rely on it absolutely, because one day it will let you down exactly when you need it the most. Even now, I carry overhead transparencies, photocopies and printed notes of important presentations just in case the laptop or palmtop versions don't work.

## Record keeping

If you get invited to give lots of lectures or presentations, sooner or later you'll find yourself forgetting what you said, where and when. This may not matter, but if it does then you ought to record the topic, date and place in a separate Agenda or Data file, perhaps using Symlink (reviewed in issue 24) to connect this log to the presentation itself and the associated notes. This would then give you a complete journal of everything you've delivered, complete with time, place and audience, and help you avoid that embarrassing feeling halfway through a presentation when you suddenly remember that you said exactly the same thing in the same place to the same people *last* year!

# A reference library in your POCKET

***Storing and retrieving information is one of the main purposes of owning a palmtop. John Woodthorpe investigates some useful add-ons...***



## Native EPOC

The **PocketInfo** web site (*www.pocketinfo.org*) has a huge collection of useful Data, Word, Sheet and Agenda files, as well as platform-independent formats such as plain and comma-separated (CSV) text. The files also apply largely to the Series 3 range as well as to the newer EPOC palmtops. They range from an episode guide to the comedy series 'Are You Being Served', to a database of UK Youth Hostels.

There's also an index to the site in Data format and browsing this is an almost surreal experience: in quick succession you come across a tourist guide to Vienna, Belgian postcodes, Christmas carol lyrics, the laws of cricket, Spanish verb conjugations and lists of short wave radio stations. The highlights for me are the interactive spreadsheet files, typified by the mathematical and engineering-related submissions for numerical analysis, linear regression, and equation graphing and solving. The huge Numerical Analysis suite is an object lesson in what can be done with embedding a collection of EPOC files into one 'envelope'.

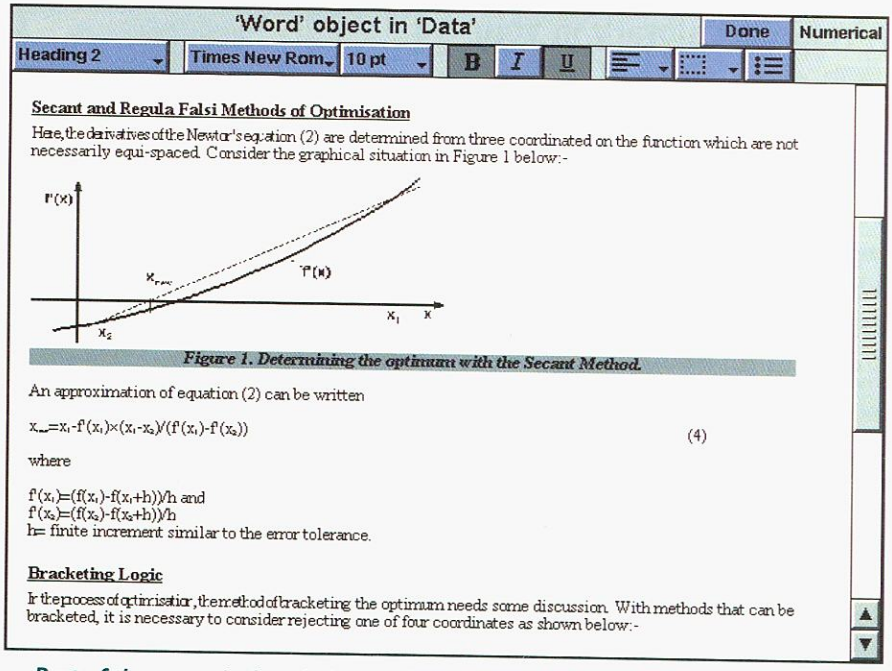
Also valuable are the encyclopaedic entries such as the GSM Data Companion and the Engineering Maths and Science & Technology databases. Psion themselves made this collection possible, stimulating the submission of files by offering prizes and funding the site. Currently PocketInfo is in limbo while Psion decides its future, but it's to be hoped that they make arrangements for this excellent service to continue.

## Third party applications

Geographical packages such as **Route Planner** and **Street Planner** (covered in issues 26 and 27 respectively) are, at heart, sophisticated graphical front ends to large databases. More obvious information stores are the dictionaries, encyclopaedias and books available in electronic format.

### Dictionaries

Most Psion palmtops have a built-in spell checker with varying dictionary capabilities, although none are as comprehensive as the one released on SSD for the Series 3 range some years ago. This has been rectified with the appearance of shareware and commercial dictionaries such as **LittleSense** and


'Word' object in 'Data'
Done
Numerical
Heading 2
Times New Rom
10 pt
B
I
U
Secant and Regula Falsi Methods of Optimisation
Here, the derivatives of the Newton's equation (2) are determined from three coordinated on the function which are not necessarily equi-spaced. Consider the graphical situation in Figure 1 below:-
f'(x)
f'(x)
x
Figure 1. Determining the optimum with the Secant Method.
An approximation of equation (2) can be written
(4)
where
f'(x1)=(f(x1)-f(x1+h))/h and
f'(x2)=(f(x2)-f(x2+h))/h
h= finite increment similar to the error tolerance.
Bracketing Logic
In the process of optimisation, the method of bracketing the optimum needs some discussion. With methods that can be bracketed, it is necessary to consider rejecting one of four coordinates as shown below:-

*Part of the numerical analysis suite from PocketInfo*

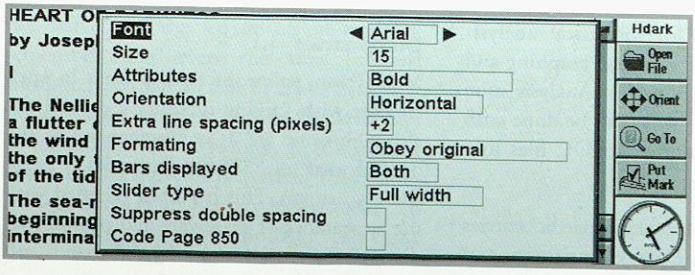
**TrueTerm** (both reviewed in issue 27) and **Collins Cobuild** (reviewed in issue 26). You can also get free dictionaries in **TomeRaider** format (see below), giving plenty of choice.

## Encyclopaedias

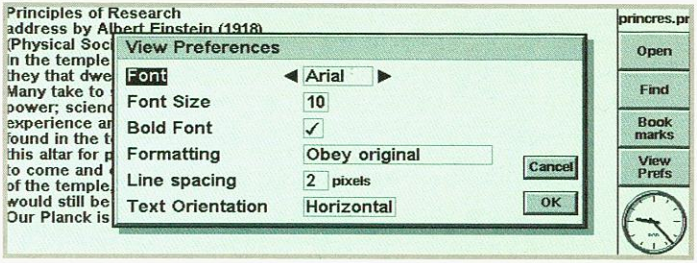
Due to the huge amount of memory required to store their data, encyclopaedias have traditionally been a no-go area for palmtops. With large CF cards becoming commonplace though, I'd expect to see an EPOC encyclopaedia before too long. See the section on TomeRaider opposite if you can't wait, or try the freeware **Trivia** (*3lib.ukonline.co.uk*).

## Electronic book readers

The freeware **VReader5** was briefly covered in issue 23, reading plain text, the compressed




*Some of the display options in VReader5*




*Albert Einstein making an appearance on EPOC with EBook*

'TCR' format made popular by the original Series 3 **Reader** application and the increasingly common Palm/Pilot 'DOC' format (typified by '.prc' and '.pdb' file extensions).

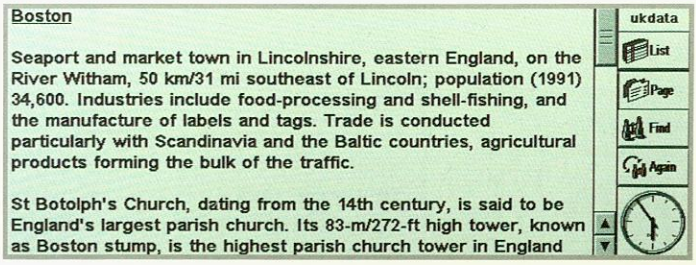
**EBook** (see page 15) is newer and perhaps a better bet. It's also free, small and stunningly fast, it can do most of the things its predecessor did and has fewer of the stability problems that sometimes plagued VReader5.

### TomeRaider

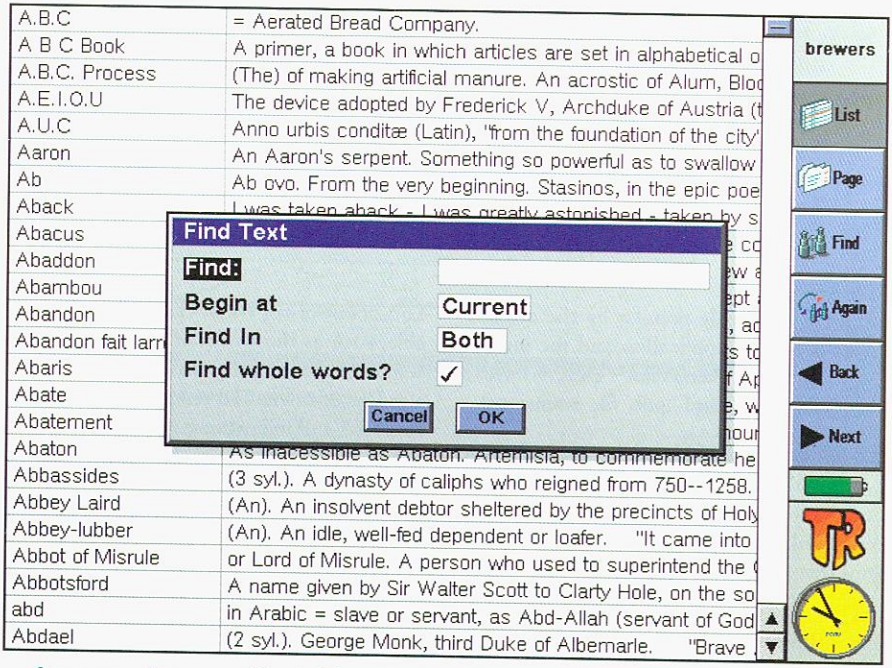
TomeRaider looks and feels rather like the built-in Data application, but uses its own highly-compressed file format. There's no native EPOC tool for creating these files, just a Windows utility for your desktop PC. Fortunately, there's an ever increasing resource of files in TomeRaider format on the Internet (and on the *Palmtop* CD). Some of the titles available are large tomes such as Webster's (a fairly old edition, mind you), Brewers Dictionary of Phrase and Fable, The Bible and the Internet Movie Database. Lots of out-of-copyright classics are also available, such as the works of Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins and Thomas Hardy. There are also lists of towns and cities, the CIA World Factbook and many more.

TomeRaider is a very impressive application, despite a few cosmetic blemishes in the current version: for example, tapping an entry in the list view sometimes highlights the wrong one briefly, and the slider can appear in the wrong place on the scroll bar. In addition, showing and hiding the toolbar takes several seconds.

TomeRaider is currently better suited to reading reference material than novels, as many of the niceties of VReader5 and EBook are missing. There's no way of changing the font size to make reading easier and the text cannot be reformatted, which sometimes leaves orphaned ends of lines hanging around to distract the eye from following the text. It would also help if the spacebar could be configured to scroll down a screenfull of text at a time instead of having to use


Boston
Seaport and market town in Lincolnshire, eastern England, on the River Witham, 50 km/31 mi southeast of Lincoln; population (1991) 34,600. Industries include food-processing and shell-fishing, and the manufacture of labels and tags. Trade is conducted particularly with Scandinavia and the Baltic countries, agricultural products forming the bulk of the traffic.
St Botolph's Church, dating from the 14th century, is said to be England's largest parish church. Its 83-m/272-ft high tower, known as Boston stump, is the highest parish church tower in England
ukdata
List
Page
Find
Again

*Part of the UK data file viewed with TomeRaider*




*Some very fast searching in TomeRaider...*

[Fn]+[PgDn]. Finally, searching a book is not terribly efficient as you're left at the top of an entry instead of being taken directly to the word you want.

It's very straightforward to use though, and TomeRaider searches even the largest files amazingly quickly. The degree of compression is also impressive, with the original 45MB of Webster's Encyclopaedia converting into a 15MB TomeRaider file.

## Converting your own data

When you want to convert significant amounts of your own data, there are plenty of choices. In addition to using standard EPOC Data, Word, Sheet and Web (HTML) documents, you can compress your text into TomeRaider, TCR or DOC formats. If you only have printed information, such as a company document, you may have to scan it and convert it to text using Optical Character Recognition (OCR) first: if done on the move, then the Siemens Pocket Reader (reviewed in issue 23) can be a useful tool.

### Be careful of Copyright!

There are legal restrictions on what you can do with copyrighted material. Just because you have data in one format doesn't necessarily give you the right to copy or convert it into another format. Copyright laws vary throughout the world, but the key point is to make sure you have the permission of the copyright holder if you want to put copyrighted material onto your palmtop.

# Working with Time

*Getting more than you thought possible from the humble Time application*

*by Pete Sipple*

**The EPOC Time application is really two programs in one: World and Alarm. Indeed, if you previously owned a Series 3, you'll remember that 'Time' and 'World' occupied separate locations on the icon bar. On the Series 5mx it was even banished to a combined position on the Extras bar but has reappeared as a 'hard' icon beneath the screen on the Revo.**

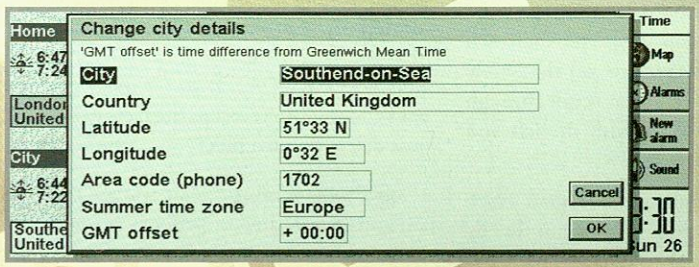
## Around the World

With such crowd-pulling and instantly demonstrable features as world time, sunrise/sunset, international dialling codes and distances, Time is often used just to show off EPOC's graphics capabilities. For many of us however, it's a lot more important.

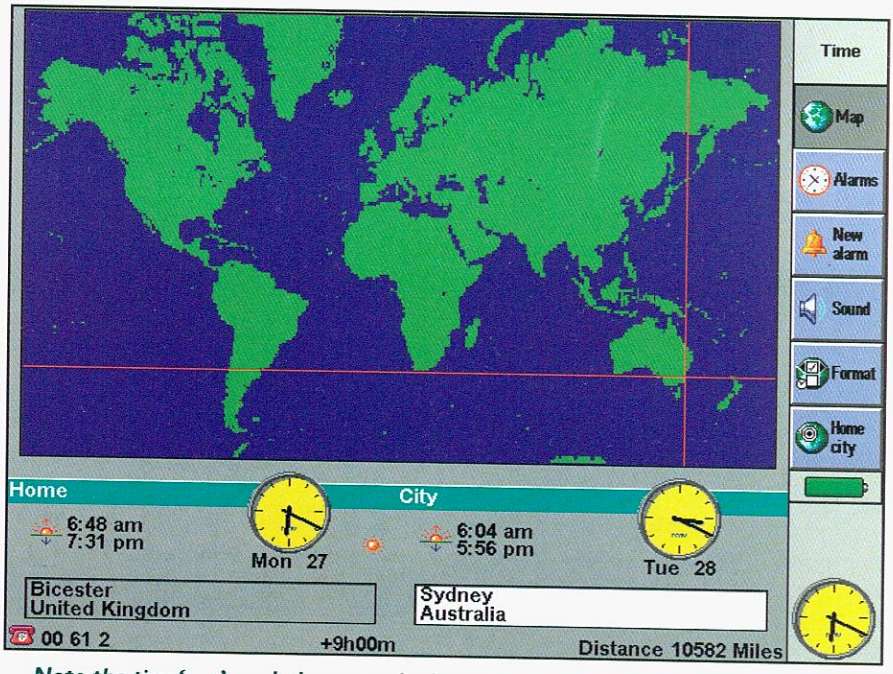
The world is a changing place. Looking at an old World database on the Series 3 shows just how many countries and cities have undergone changes in the last few years. If it's not borders moving or names changing then it's new telephone dialling codes. Changes to local summer time standards add a final complication, especially if you need an accurate world clock.

## There's no place like home

The mechanics of adding and changing both cities and countries are fairly straightforward, so I won't go into all the various options. For most of us, all we need to do is add our own home town to the map. To do this, select 'Add city' from the Map view's 'Edit' menu card and enter the relevant details. Once




*Adding your home city to the World application*




***Note the tiny 'sun' symbol next to the home city clock, indicating summer time***

added, use 'Home...' and select this as your home town.

The following are also possible within the Map view:

- Add, change and delete cities—note that you can only delete a city or country that you have created, not one of the default entries.
- Display the cities in a single country only. Do this by selecting the country at the bottom of the Map view, and then tick 'Cities in current country' on the 'View' menu card. You can then scroll through that country's city list with the left and right arrow keys.
- Change from analogue to digital clock formats either from the menu or by tapping on any of the three clocks displayed.
- View sunlight hours and see at a glance if a city is in 'daylight saving' mode (by the appearance of a tiny sun symbol beside the local clock).
- Set the measurement units to Kilometres, Miles or Nautical miles.

Note that the \system\data folder contains files that hold all of your customised World data. If you've made lots of changes, make sure that you backup the files WLD_DATA.DBW and WLDSRV.DAT. If you've made changes and you want to revert to the factory defaults, just delete the two files.

## Time to spare?

The time-keeping part of Time is pretty straightforward. Setting the time to that of your home city and then getting the 'Summer time' settings right are the main tasks you'll need to perform. Note that computer clocks are notoriously unreliable, but if your PC clock is generally accurate (maybe getting its time regularly from an Internet atomic clock server) then you can configure PsiWin to synchronize your PC and palmtop clocks each time you connect them together, via the 'Properties | Connection' dialog.

*Keeping the time in sync...*

One of the most useful features of a device that goes everywhere with you has to be its alarms. It can remind you of an important meeting, a birthday or a weekly event, as well as being your daily wake-up alarm clock. The only real drawback is having alarms going off at an awkward moment. I've lost count of the times that my jacket has started chiming halfway through a meeting. There are a few things you can do within the Alarm view to keep these noises under control.

- If it's a regular daily alarm, such as your early morning wake-up call, set it to 'Workdays' to preserve your weekend lie-in. You can alter your working days easily with [Ctrl]+[W].

*Setting alarms for weekdays only*

- If you want to suspend an alarm, 'disable' it with [Ctrl]+[L]. This will cross out the entry, giving you a visual reminder that it should be reinstated at some point.

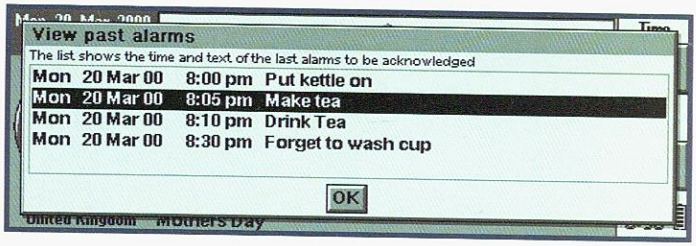
## WWW world resources

If you have access to the Internet, there are a host of online resources to help find your home city's latitude and longitude and to check world times and summer time zone settings:

**Longitude and Latitude** - A fully searchable database of worldwide locations can be found at *www.astro.com/atlas* (in both English and German). You can also find a smaller selection of worldwide locations at *www.bcca.org/misc/qiblih/latlong.html* .

**Time Zone** - A map of world time zones can be found at *aa.usno.navy.mil/AA/faq/docs/world_tzones.html* .

**World Clock** - This can be a great help in working out which countries are currently in summertime daylight saving. A real-time map of the time in all of the worldwide time zones can be found at *www.worldtimezone.com/time-world.htm* .


View past alarms
The list shows the time and text of the last alarms to be acknowledged
Mon 20 Mar 00 8:00 pm Put kettle on
Mon 20 Mar 00 8:05 pm Make tea
Mon 20 Mar 00 8:10 pm Drink Tea
Mon 20 Mar 00 8:30 pm Forget to wash cup
OK

*Looking at old alarms on a Revo*

- If you don't want to be disturbed during something important (for up to 24 hours) you can silence your machine completely for that period. Use [Ctrl]+[S], then select 'Alarm sound' as 'Silent for' a set period of time. When the time's up, your sound is automatically turned back on again.

*Keeping the noise down for a couple of hours*

One final great feature of EPOC's Time is that you can look ahead to see what your next alarms will be and when they are due to sound. You can also view your previous eight alarms, useful to see what you missed when, for instance, you silenced an alarm in a hurry without looking to see its alarm text.

Time may not be the most exciting bit of software on your palmtop, but you'd probably be lost without it. Take a moment to check your settings and make sure you're making the most of this indispensable little application.

# Win a FREE 4MB flash SSD or 80MB CompactFlash!!

1. *What does DAB stand for?*

2. *Which program can read an 'RMV' file?*

3. *What two Series 7/netBook peripherals contain moving parts?*

Whether you're a Series 3, or EPOC user, you can expand the capacity of your computer by winning either a Psion 4MB flash SSD or 80MB CompactFlash—you choose which prize you want.

Just answer the three questions above and send your answers on a postcard to Palmtop Publications, PO Box 188, Bicester, Oxfordshire OX6 0GP, ENGLAND.

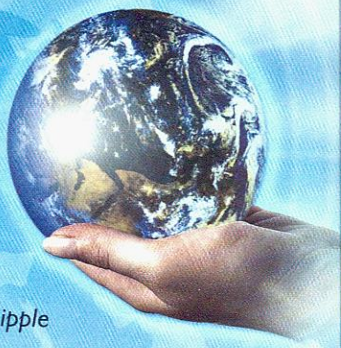
We can only accept entries by postcard, and all postcards must be clearly labelled COMPETITION 28M. Any entries received by means other than postcard will be discarded. Please include your prize choice and a contact telephone number on your postcard. Anyone posting multiple entries will be disqualified.

All entries must reach us by 25th May 2000. The decision of Palmtop Publications is final.

**Competition sponsored by Expansys Ltd.**
**Visit www.expansys.co.uk**

# On the NET

**Our regular look at what's happening online, and where to point your browser**



*by Pete Sipple*

## Seventh Heaven

Last time around, we looked at web sites springing up for the Revo, but what of Psion's other new products? The launch of Psion Enterprise's netBook and Psion Computers' Series 7 was quickly followed by the arrival of several excellent sites. Here are a couple that are well worth a look:

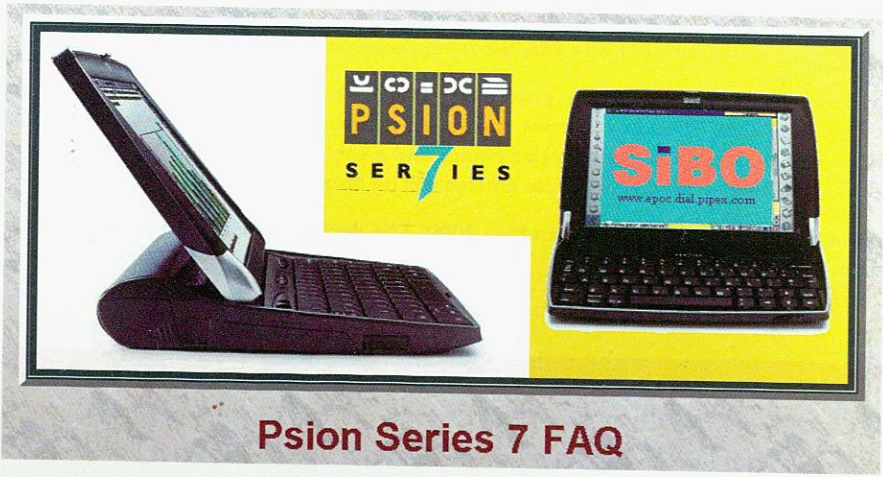
**The Series 7 FAQ** - a comprehensive set of questions and answers for prospective purchasers. *www.geocities.com/epoc_32* .

**FoxPop** - follow the links to the Series 7 and netBook 'Roadtests' for a stack of information, as well as details of what's under the hood. *www.foxpop.ndirect.co.uk* .

## Revo revised

Another Revo-dedicated site has recently appeared. Although in its infancy, the 'Revo Fan Page' may be one to watch. At present, it contains information on mobile data, an email discussion group and, at the time of going to press, special deals on mobile hardware. *www.revofan.co.uk* .

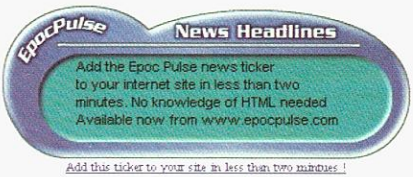
OK, so who else is hooked on the Revo's Cascade game? My girlfriend can't stay off the damn thing and she's popping away in the background at this very moment. If you think you're the best at this addictive game, post your highest Cascade score (or SameGame, for other Psion devices) on the league table at *www.epoczone.com/jon/samegame.php3* .



## Hit-Hiking and Site-Spicing

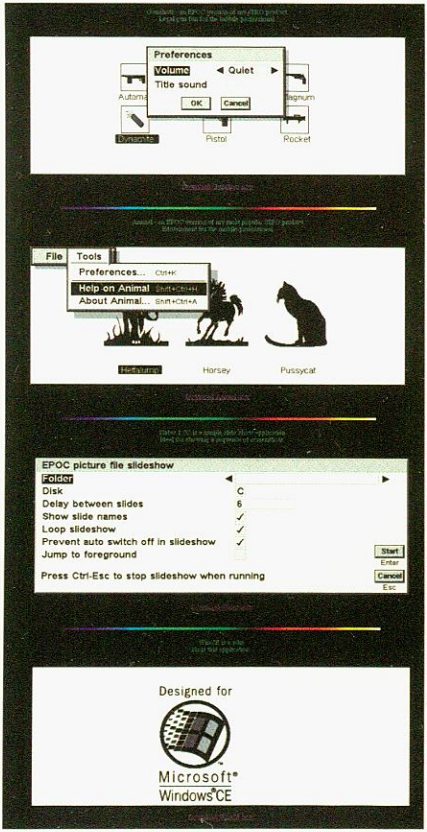
If you run your own EPOC-related site and are looking for ways to increase traffic or add something new, here are a few suggestions:

- **Web Rings**. By joining a ring, you can be added to a list of similar sites. Surfers can hop to other sites from yours or stumble across you by navigating around the ring. There are two rings in existence, the Psioneer web ring at *www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/8130/psioneer.htm* and a Series 5/EPOC-specific one at *www.planetepoc.com/webring* .
- **Mailing lists**. Create your own email discussion list and start an online debate. A great (free) way to keep in touch with your visitors. There are several web-based 'list-servers' around, including *www.onelist.com* and *www.listbot.com* .
- **Newsfeed**. A rather snazzy addition to your site might be the new scrolling EPOC news engine supplied by *www.epocpulse.com* —the latest news delivered to your web site.


EpocPulse
News Headlines
Add the Epoc Pulse news ticker
to your internet site in less than two
minutes. No knowledge of HTML needed
Available now from www.epocpulse.com
Add this ticker to your site in less than two minutes !

## Empty your mind

I've now paid several visits to this site and I'm still not sure how best to describe it—which I should imagine is precisely what the site's author intended. Braindrain claims that its contents are 'permanently under destruction'. There's some useful information and links to other sites, and also some




surprisingly useful software, though it's the *useless* software that had me intrigued. As well as a virus checker, an online ghost and a memory-resident insult generator, you'll also be able to download a WinCE emulator (sort of), a utility called 'Lights' which randomly turns on your backlight to waste the battery, and, my personal favourite, Gunshots, a novelty that allows you blast away stress. It's a must!

*www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Heights/5596*

If you find a web site that *you* think deserves a mention, please feel free to email me at *info@palmtop.co.uk* .

# Hints & Tips

***Every item published in this section wins the author TWO free issues added to their subscription!***

## Java on the MC218

Having been unable to get the Web browser to run Java applets in HTML pages on my Ericsson MC218, I found that there's a difference between the Psion and Ericsson versions of the Java Virtual Machine (JVM) software. This stopped the Ericsson JVM becoming a plug-in for the browser. Ericsson have now fixed this problem with a download on the Ericsson Mobile Internet site (*mobileinternet.ericsson.se/emi/default.asp*).

*Phil O'Dwyer (via the Internet)*

## Cheating at SimCity

If you've ever been as frustrated as I am at running out of money too easily in SimCity for EPOC (even on the 'Easy' level), take heart that the original 'cheat' from the PC version still works well. Type "FUNDS" (in uppercase) on the keyboard and your wealth will automatically increase by $10,000. If only this worked in real life...

*Ian Carlisle, Ruislip, Middlesex*

## Multiple numbers

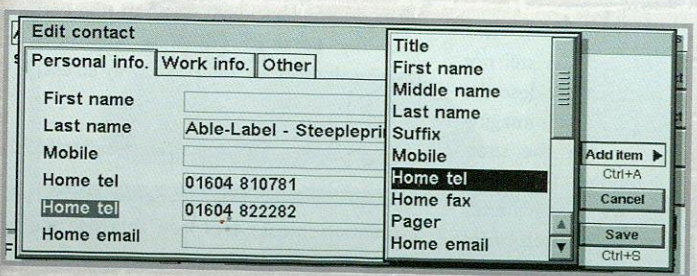
In the article 'Working with Contacts' (in issue 26) the author appears to have missed a useful feature of the application. He implied that the way to add, for example, multiple home telephone numbers to a contact is to rename another, unused, label.

This isn't necessary, as you can in fact add several instances of *any* label to a contact. For example, just tap on the 'Add item' toolbar button, select 'Home tel' and another home telephone field appears. This holds true for any label, and also gets around the problem of renamed fields not being diallable if they weren't previously telephone numbers.

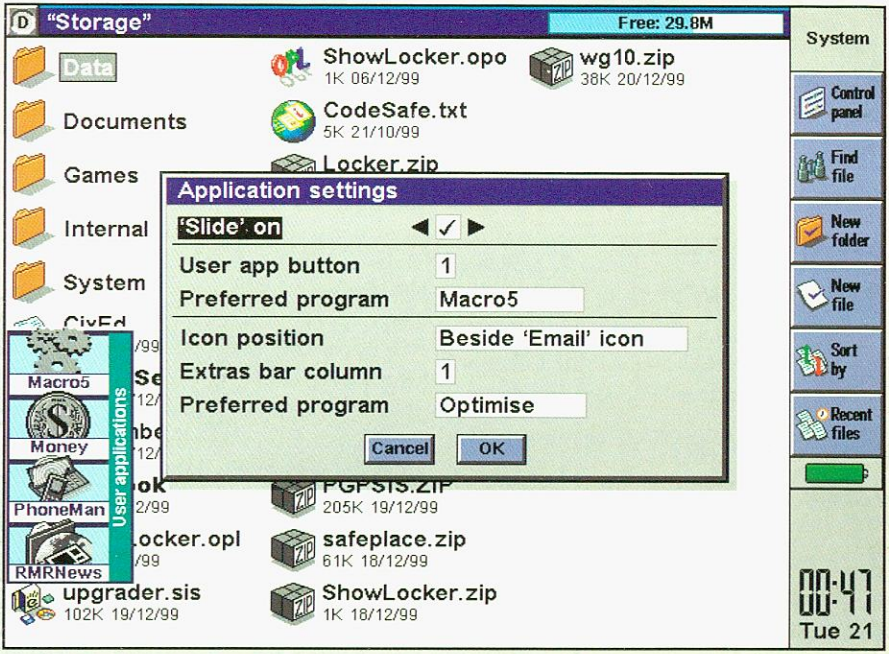
*Paul Harrison, Farnham, Surrey*

## Series 7 extras and bugs

Pressing [Ctrl] plus any one of the user-defined application buttons on the left side of the Series 7 screen displays a mini Extras bar relating only to these applications. From here it's easy to change the configuration of these buttons.




***Adding multiple instances of a label in Contacts***




*Configuring the User Applications bar on the Series 7*

I've also noticed two bugs in the built-in spell-checker. Firstly, words are prevented from being added to the spellchecker's personal dictionary if it's opened from outside of Word—the dialog simply doesn't work. There is, however, a workaround. Type the word into the search box, then use [Ctrl]+[W] to add a word. It will now appear in the personal dictionary (if it isn't already in there).

Secondly, check the 'File | Properties' of \system\data\user.dic and ensure that the 'Read only' attribute is *not* checked and that the 'Modified' attribute *is*. If these are set wrongly, they too will prevent words from being added to the user dictionary.

*Ewan Sidebottom, Southsea, Hampshire*

## ISP blues banished

Several people have reportedly had problems configuring PsiMail Internet (PMI) for the Series 3 with the popular free ISPs in the UK. PMI's main omission is the ability to automatically get the magic 'DNS' numbers from the ISP's system. To save readers an expensive phone call to a premium support number, here are the DNS numbers for both Freeserve and PsionNet:

Freeserve: Primary - 194.152.64.68 (and, if needed, Secondary - 194.152.64.35)

PsionNet: Primary - 194.75.152.200

*Patrick Kilbaum, Glasgow*

# Q&A

*Get your Psion-related questions answered by our editorial panel...*

## Directory printouts

**Q** Is there any way I can print out a hard-copy listing of the files and folders on my Psion?

*Rob White, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire*

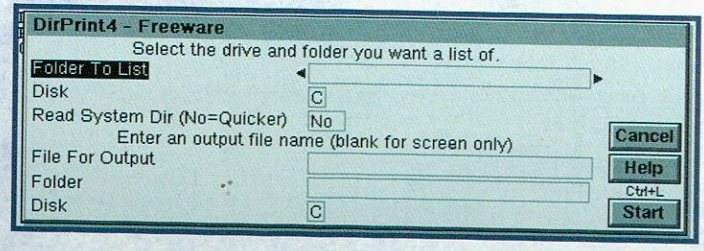
**A** **Yes, with a small freeware (EPOC) utility called DirPrint, which appears on all recent Palmtop CDs. DirPrint creates file/folder listings that can either be viewed on screen or sent to a text file that can be printed out for your reference. Items are listed in date order, and you can filter the list to show only filenames containing specified characters.**

## Five to Revo won't go

**Q** I have a Psion Series 5 'classic' and my friend has a Revo. On many occasions we have exchanged files via infrared, with no trouble at all. However my friend has recently had to hard reset his palmtop and now, whenever I send a file to him, the Revo beeps a funny little noise and then turns off. This is completely repeatable and happens whichever file we try to beam. What's going on?

*Adam Kraus, via the Internet*

**A** **There's obviously some strange incompatibility here. We've consulted with Psion and suggest that perhaps the Series 5 needs updating with the latest infrared 'patch' from *www.psion.com/downloads* . And of course (as always), it's well worth doing a soft reset on both machines, one at a time and making sure you have a good backup (just in case). If you still have problems, you should report them directly to *uk-support@psion.com* . Although getting a response back from this email address is often slow, Psion claim that messages *are* read, logged and acted upon.**




*DirPrint. A useful freeware utility to print out or view directory listings*

## More IR woes

**Q** When I transfer Sheet files (via infrared) from my Series 7 to a Series 5 'classic' and then load them up, I get the message 'Information not found'. All other file types open perfectly after transfer. Strangely, it used to work perfectly, but hasn't since I loaned the Series 5 to my son and I had to do a complete PsiWin 'Restore' when I got it back!

*John Roach, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire*

**A** **As with the previous question, there's something subtly wrong here. Perhaps the loan-and-restore clue is a 'red herring' and your Series 7 spreadsheets now include some object or header information that previously wasn't there? All we can suggest is that you contact Psion (see above) and give them as much information as possible about the problem, including the state of the Series 5 (i.e. which ROM version, whether it has Message Suite loaded, and if so then which version, patches, etc.)**

## Local printing

**Q** I have a HP Deskjet 340 printer, which I use to print documents via infrared. Despite selecting Psion's Deskjet 340 driver, I cannot seem to print out any text larger than about 10 or 12 point. If I create a document with larger text (say 32 point), when I print it out via infrared the text invariably comes out smaller than the size I've specified.

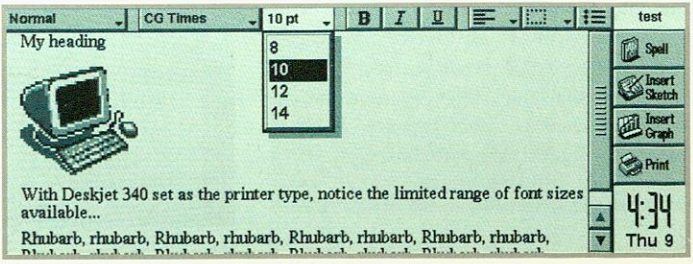
I suspect that printed text size is restricted by the in-built fonts of the printer, but what then is the purpose of the Psion driver? Surely, like Windows, it should enable text to be printed out at sizes larger than those built into the printer? Is it because I print via infrared rather than a cable connection?

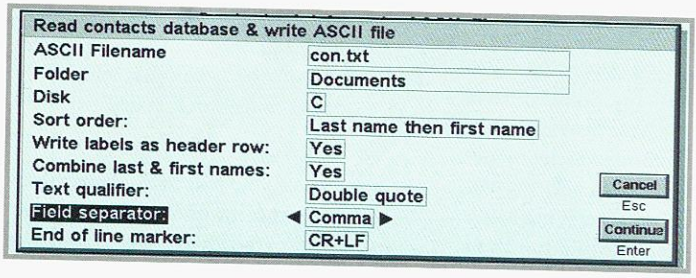
*Andy Palmer, Middlesborough*

**A** **The fact that you're printing via infrared isn't the problem. Although EPOC uses a graphical interface (which includes support for printing bitmapped graphics), text is still sent to local printers as simple characters, to be output through the printer's built-in character sets. So your suspicion was right. EPOC is certainly up to the job of fully rasterizing text fonts though, especially with the large memory sizes of the Series 5mx and 7—perhaps we'll see this improvement in a future patch or upgrade?**

**The only part of your question we're unsure of is that you claim to have set text size to '32'. With the Deskjet 340 driver selected the choice of font sizes**

***Printing from your Psion—all too often fraught with unexpected results...***






*Converting a Contacts database with C2F*

**is far more limited and doesn't go this high. You should always make sure you select the printer you're intending to use before doing any serious formatting work within a document.**

## Exporting Contacts

Q I have a contact management program running on my desktop computer (not Microsoft Outlook, by the way) and know that it will import a generic CSV (comma separated value) file. Is it possible to export all the names and details from EPOC's Contacts application in CSV format? PsiWin 2.3 doesn't seem to be able to help me.

*Paul Hutton, Puckeridge, Hertfordshire*

A **A long-winded solution might be to install Outlook, synchronize your contacts and then export from that instead, removing Outlook afterwards. More conveniently, C2F is a small freeware application by Malcolm Bryant which reads the Contacts database and writes the fields you choose to a standard comma or tab-delimited text file. You can link to the author's web site from *www.palmtop.co.uk/authors.htm*.**

## The millennium Sheet blues

Q I've been using the Psion spreadsheet for a long time now, using its handy Date functions on my Series 3a. The help screens tell me to use the form '=DATE(year,month,day)'. Until this year I had no problem, but now when I want to use "00" or "2000" for the year, I get strange results. What am I doing wrong?

*Jacques Bouchard, Chicoutimi, CANADA*

A **This is a very common question and the answer is reassuringly simple. The help screens also explain that 1900 is year '0', which is why years in the past have simply been entered as two-digit numbers. As we've now entered a new millennium, you need to start using "100", "101" (for 2001), etc. In other words, staying consistent with the year 1900 being the start of Sheet's timeline. Incidentally, Sheet itself can generate dates in the year 2000 perfectly, as the screen shot below shows (adding one day to December 31st 1999).**

B6

| | A | B |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | =date(99,12,31) | 31/12/1999 |
| 2 | =B1+1 | 01/01/2000 |
| 3 | | |
| 4 | =date(0,1,1) | 01/01/1900 |
| 5 | =date(100,1,1) | 01/01/2000 |
| 6 | | |

*Making sure that you copy EVERYTHING onto CF disk*

## Comms components

**Q** Help! I'm trying to use PsiWin to install the Web browser onto my Psion Revo, but keep getting the error message: 'The component Comms components (TCP/IP) is not present. Install Comms components (TCP/IP) and try again'.

*David Jacobs, Bridgend*

**A** **This is a known problem when installing from an older version of PsiWin (2.0 or 2.1), but there's an easy workaround.**

**Use Windows Explorer to view the \Extras\Internet\Revo folder on your CD. Copy the file web.SIS onto your palmtop and remove the 'Read-only' flag (using 'File | Properties...'). Finally, tap on the file to install using EPOC's built-in 'Add/remove' facility.**

**Incidentally, we've also heard from a number of readers with email and web problems after upgrading from a Series 5 to the Revo or 5mx. Please note that all parts of Message Suite for the Series 5 'Classic' are *not* compatible with EPOC Release 5, as featured on the newer machines. As we've mentioned before in *Palmtop*, take care when transferring files from old to new palmtops that you don't accidentally copy over libraries and program components from the earlier version of Message Suite. See 'Moving to the mx' in issue 25 for more details.**

## Backing up to CF

**Q** I recently had a problem with Email on the 5mx. After speaking to Psion, they said a hard reset would sort it out. I dutifully backed up (or thought I backed up) all my files to a CompactFlash disk and then took the plunge.

Email came back to life, and after entering my modem and network settings in the Control panel all was well. All, that is, except for the Contacts application. All of my names and addresses had completely disappeared. So why did Agenda save all of its information, but not Contacts?

Assuming that I did something fundamentally wrong, what *is* the correct way to make backups to CompactFlash?

*Nick Ellerington, Wetherby, West Yorkshire*

*Don't forget that you can submit your tips or questions by normal mail to the address given on page 1, or alternatively by email, to editor@palmtop.co.uk . Please be sure to put "Tips" or "Q&A" in the 'subject' line of your email.*

**A** Unlike most of the other (document-based) built-in applications, Contacts keeps its data tucked 'safely' away inside the (normally hidden) System folder. So safe in fact that most people don't know it's there, and like yourself forget to copy it across when copying folders across to the CF.

Although too late to save your data, the solution in future is to back up using the 'Copy disk' menu command, rather than individually selected files and folders. This copies *everything* on a disk to a named folder on another disk, including the hidden System area. The specific file Contacts uses is \System\Data\Contacts.cdb, by the way.

## Osaris compatibility

**Q** I recently purchased an 8MB Oregon Scientific Osaris palmtop, which I understood to be a Psion 'clone'. Despite this, much of the software I try to run on the Osaris fails to work, or at least displays a partially cropped screen. Is there something I need to adjust to make things work correctly?

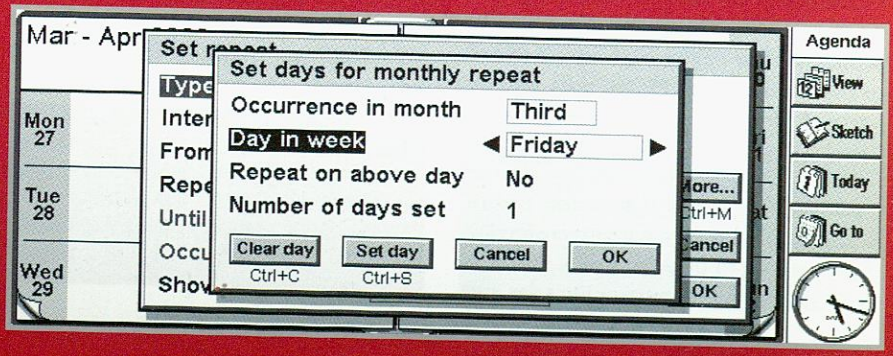
*Dan Thornton, Aberdeen*

**A** Although some software is 'intelligent' enough to adjust for the Osaris' sub-Revo sized screen, most is not. You'll need to contact program authors individually (or use trial and error) to find out which programs are compatible.

## Repeating entries revisited...

In our 'Repeating on the 31st... tip in the last issue, we stated that you can't set an appointment to repeat, say, on the third Friday of each month. Of course you *can*, and here's how:

1. Highlight the entry that you want to repeat and hit [Ctrl]+[R] to 'Set repeat...'
2. From the resulting 'Set repeat' dialog, choose 'Monthly by days' in the 'Type' line.
3. Type [Ctrl]+[M] or tap the 'More...' button.
4. You can then set which week of the month you want the entry to repeat on: first, second, third, fourth or last.



# COMPETITION

1. *Which EPOC application has a 'Wobble' function?*
2. *What new software supports SSL?*
3. *What game score can you post on www.revofan.co.uk?*

**In this issue we're giving away THREE POD docking stations, TWO car stands and a car power supply!**

***Please indicate your prize preference on your entry form!***

**Competition sponsored by POD Ltd.**
**see page 115 for details**

Just answer the three questions above and send your answers on a postcard to Palmtop Publications, PO Box 188, Bicester, Oxfordshire OX6 0GP, ENGLAND.

We can only accept entries by postcard, and all postcards must be clearly labelled COMPETITION 28C. Any entries received by means other than postcard will be discarded. Please include your prize choice and a contact telephone number on your postcard. Anyone posting multiple entries will be disqualified.

pod

All entries must reach us by 25th May 2000.
The decision of Palmtop Publications is final.

pod

# Musings...

***Stephen Murgan reflects on how palmtop computers helped his writing career, and admits his lousy typing skills...***

**I have been writing articles since 1985. Of course, back then, pocket-sized computers were not commonplace. In those days I wrote my creations by hand on a scribble pad in an A4 leather folio that I carried around with me. It was big, it was inconvenient, it was cumbersome, but it was the way things were done back then.**

The biggest problem was structuring my thoughts. More often than not, the ideas that make up an article would occur to me out of sequence, like the shooting of scenes in a movie which are subsequently edited into the proper order in the cutting room.

Every few days, the handwritten scrawl was laboriously typed into a computer—what I could read of it, at least. The fledgling article was then printed out and the printout went back into the folder for re-reading and annotation over the next few days, before being retyped and reprinted. It was a messy, laborious, time-consuming process that involved three or four drafts before the final version was complete.

## A writer's tool

All this changed in 1991, when a Psion Series 3 came into my life. With Word, it was now easy to insert new thoughts and ideas—as they occurred to me—exactly where they belonged. All I had to worry about was backing up the files once or twice a week, just in case the unthinkable happened (it never did).

The Psion was useful in other ways as well: the outliner was a godsend with its ability to navigate easily around articles. As an added bonus, the word count function made it easy to check the length of the article under construction. Agenda was the logical place to put down any questions that needed researching and keep track of publishing deadlines. Even Data got in on the act, keeping track of names and addresses of editors. I even have a spreadsheet for keeping track of the articles under construction.

When I traded up to a later model I gained a spelling checker and thesaurus. Now I happen to be a gifted speller (which is a good thing) but a pretty dire typist (which is not such a good thing). The spell checker took care of most of the typos and allowed me to concentrate on the more important tasks of developing and proof-reading my evolving creations.

## Capture the moment!

Whichever model of palmtop you have, it gives you the flexibility to work on an idea whenever you have a spare moment; whether you are on hold ("Your call is important to us"), sitting in the doctor/dentist/psychiatrist's office (!) or waiting for a bus. It's surprising how much of our lives we spend waiting, and a palmtop computer can put that 'dead' time to good use.

Whatever you use, the important thing is to capture the idea and get it 'structured' as soon as possible, and for this purpose the Psion series of pocket computers are matchless tools. Palm organisers are all very well, but try using one to draft more than a couple of paragraphs of text...

## Still on SIBO

If truth be told, the reason that I have not written anything in *Palmtop* for so long is that Psionically speaking, not much new has happened in my world. I still have my trusty woodgrain Series 3a (which has needed repairs *twice* in the past year) and on the whole I am still happy with it. It is a mature system, reliable and familiar. But it's starting to develop faults that tell me its days are numbered and a replacement will shortly be required. For a few months last year I was fortunate enough to have the loan of an evaluation 3mx which was much faster and had a backlight. However, these are as rare as hens teeth in the USA now they've been (prematurely) discontinued.

## Resisting the urge

I am still resisting the siren call of the Series 5. Not because I don't like it, but because I don't really need one. Before you call me a Luddite, let me say that the 5 is an excellent machine but I find the 3 easier to use in a standing position. I don't particularly care for a 'stylus interface', though the voice-recorder functionality built into the Series 5 (but not, it would appear, into the Revo) would be neat when I am driving and suddenly remember something (ever notice how the best thoughts always seem to come to you when your are in no position to do anything about them?)

## Decision time

However, with Series 3 machines and spares rapidly becoming an endangered species the time is approaching when an upgrade will be my only option. I thus find myself with some tough decisions.

My first choice is to see if I can get my hands on a 3mx. It's cheap, it works well, it's fast, has a great screen and zero learning curve.

If that proves impossible, I have the even tougher choice between the 5mx and the Revo. I would prefer a 5mx—the Revo, though cool, lacks the voice recorder and CompactFlash expansion slot, but I can't decide whether these features are worth the extra cash. Choices, choices.

# Glossary - a guide to some common technical terms

**Application bar** - The touch-sensitive strip along the edge of most EPOC screens, from which selected built-in applications can be launched.

**C++** - An efficient high level programming language now used for the majority of commercial EPOC applications. Much harder to learn than OPL, but more powerful and usually gives more compact, faster code.

**CF** - See **CompactFlash**.

**Commercial software** - Software produced by full-time programming companies, most often supplied in pre-packaged form.

**CompactFlash** - Small solid-state memory expansion modules, as used in all current EPOC devices except the Revo. See the 'Inside CompactFlash' feature in issue 17 of *Palmtop*.

**Control panel** - Invoked by pressing [Crtl]+[K] from the System screen on EPOC devices, showing a list of system control functions such as screen and keyboard settings, printer and dialling preferences, etc.

**EIKON** - The 'front end' interface used on all current EPOC devices, that governs the position and appearance of menus, icons, dialog boxes, etc.

**Embedding** - The act of placing a Spreadsheet, Sketch, Sound object, etc. *within* another EPOC document.

**Emulator** - A program that mimics the operation of one computer operating system on another. PC-based emulators are available for both SIBO and EPOC devices.

**EPOC** - Term used to describe the operating system used on the Series 5 range of palmtops and all other current models. Not actually an acronym, EPOC was coined from 'Epoch', being touted as a new 'era' in handheld operating systems.

**EPOC Connect** - The name given to PsiWin when bundled with non-Psion devices such as those made by Ericsson and Oregon Scientific. Functionally almost identical to equivalent PsiWin versions.

**ER1/ER2/ER3** - EPOC Release 1/2/3. The first major versions of the EPOC operating system, as employed on the original Series 5 'Classic' and Geofox One.

**ER4** - EPOC Release 4. An update of the EPOC operating system employed only (to date) on the Oregon Scientific Osaris.

**ER5** - EPOC Release 5. Currently the latest version of EPOC, as used on the Series 5mx, Series 7, netBook, Revo and Ericsson MC218.

**Flash** - Another term for 'flash memory' devices, such as **CompactFlash** and flash **SSD**.

**Freeware** - Software that is supplied or made downloadable free of charge. The author/programmer makes no charge for its use, but usually offers no warranties on its stability or performance.

**FTP** - File Transfer Protocol. FTP sites are sometimes used instead of World Wide Web (WWW) sites as a repository for files and data and web content. Special 'FTP client' software is required to upload files to FTP sites.

**Geofox One** - The first non-Psion EPOC device, introduced in late 1997. Geofox ceased trading one year later after selling only around 1000 units. See issue 15 of *Palmtop* for a full review.

**GPS** - Global Positioning System. A GPS receiver is a small handheld device that can pinpoint your physical location anywhere in the world with an accuracy of a few tens of metres, by triangulating its position from military satellites in orbit. Some GPS receivers can be connected to EPOC devices with suitable software and cables. See issue 19 for most recent coverage in *Palmtop*.

**GSM** - Global System for Mobile telecommunications. A widely adopted worldwide communications standard for mobile telephones. Most notably absent within the USA.

**GUI** - Graphical User Interface, such as the EIKON system used on EPOC devices, utilising windows, icons, menus, etc. Was preceded by the Command Line Interface (CLI), as used on DOS-based PCs of the 1970-80s.

**Honda connector** - The small flat connector used to plug an RS232 (Serial) cable into current EPOC devices.

**HTML** - HyperText Markup Language. The simple scripting system used to create World Wide Web (WWW) pages.

**Icon bar** - See **application bar**.

**Infrared** - Wireless communication technique used to transfer data between suitably equipped palmtops and printers/modems, etc. All EPOC devices are equipped with infrared capability.

**IrDA** - Infrared Data Association. A group set up to form standards for infrared data exchange, and the term used to describe the resulting standard currently employed. All EPOC devices conform to the IrDA standard, but earlier infrared-equipped Psion Series 3 devices do not, and are thus normally unable to communicate with other IrDA devices.

**ISP** - Internet Service Provider. Companies set up to provide Internet access via a dial-up system.

**Java** - A high level programming language designed to create programs that will run, without modification, on several computing platforms, such as PC, Macintosh, Unix and EPOC. See *Palmtop* issues 25-27 for a detailed feature on Java.

**MacConnect** - Psion's nearest EPOC equivalent to PsiWin for the Apple Macintosh, but offering only backup, restore and software installation, with no file conversions or synchronization.

**Macro** - A series of keystrokes, 'recorded' and 'played back' by a suitable utility program to automate commonly-performed tasks.

**MBM** - Multi BitMap. EPOC's standard picture format.

**MC218** - Ericsson's 'clone' of the Series 5mx. Fully compatible with the Series 5mx and capable of running all software designed for the Series 5 range. Reviewed in *Palmtop* issue 24 and 26.

**Message Suite** - Psion's combined Email and Web applications for the Series 5 'Classic'.

**Modem** - Modulator/demodulator. Device used to convert computer data to/from audible pulses that can be transmitted down a conventional telephone line. Required for Internet access from a palmtop.

**netBook** - Psion's 'vertical market' variant of the Series 7, with more memory and a faster processor. Featured in *Palmtop* issue 27.

**Null modem adaptor** - small box/connector used to connect two computers or devices such as a modem via an RS232 (Serial) cable by transposing the send/receive wires.

**Object** - Spreadsheets, Sketches, Sound files, etc. that are *embedded* within another EPOC document. See **embedding**.

**OPL** - Organiser Programming Language. The BASIC-like high level programming language built into most Psion devices, which can be programmed directly from all Psion devices except for the Revo.

**OPX** - An extension to OPL, providing extra functionality under EPOC.

**Osaris** - EPOC device produced by Oregon Scientific in 1999. The Osaris will not run many EPOC programs due to its small (320x200 pixel) screen. Reviewed in *Palmtop* issue 24 and 26.

**Palmtop CD** - PC and Macintosh compatible CD-ROM supplied free with *Palmtop* magazine subscriptions and containing virtually all non-commercial Psion-related software ever produced.

**Parallel link** - Cable for connecting EPOC computers to standard Parallel (Centronics) sockets as found on most PC-compatible printers.

**PC-Card adaptor** - Psion adaptor to allow connection to PC-Card modems, etc. Reviewed in *Palmtop* issue 11.

**PCMCIA Card** - Now known simply as 'PC-Card'.

**Pixel** - Term derived from 'picture element'. Refers to a single 'dot' on a computer screen.

**POP3** - A common Internet mail protocol for downloading messages.

**PsiMac** - Psion's nearest Series 3 (SIBO) equivalent to PsiWin for the Apple Macintosh, but offering only backup, restore and software installation, plus Word and Sheet conversion.

**Psion Organiser** - Term coined with the appearance of Psion's first handheld 'organiser' device in 1984.

**PsiWin** - PC-based software that allows backup/restore, software installation, conversion of files and synchronization of certain data between Psion/EPOC devices and PCs.

**Quartz** - New category of EPOC devices featuring keyboardless operation, due for release later this year.

**RAM** - Random Access Memory.

**Revo** - The Revo was introduced in late 1999 as a cut-down and compact Series 5-like machine, with a non-backlit screen and no memory expansion capability.

**ROM** - Read Only Memory.

**RS232** - Long-standing serial communications standard used for cable connections between all Psion/EPOC devices and desktop computers.

**RTF** - Rich Text Format. A common word processor file format supported by many word processing programs, and built into Psion Series 3 devices as a standard saveable/readable format.

**SDK** - Software Development Kit. A set of tools used for programming.

**Serial cable** - See **RS232**.

**Series 3** - The first range of Psion palmtops to feature a QWERTY keyboard. First introduced in 1991, later models were the 3a, 3c and 3mx, with the 3mx finally discontinued in late 1999.

**Series 5** - The first Psion palmtops to feature the EPOC operating system, introduced in mid-1997.

**Series 7** - Introduced in late 1999 as a handheld/laptop hybrid, featuring colour screen and both CF and PC-Card expansion slots. Reviewed in *Palmtop* issue 25 and 27.

**Shareware** - Software that can be freely copied or downloaded for a fixed evaluation period, after which the software should be paid for. Shareware 'registration' fees generally range from £5-£25.

**SIBO** - Now refers to the operating system used by the Series 3 range of Psion palmtops. An acronym of 'SIngle Board Organiser'.

**Siena** - Introduced in 1996 as a cut down Series 3 device with a half-width screen and no memory expansion capabilities.

**Silk-screen** - The touch-sensitive area around the screen edge of EPOC devices, includes the menu, infrared, clipboard and zoom command icons.

**SIS** - Software Installation System. A means of installing software to an EPOC device via a single, self-extracting file.

**SMS** - Short Messaging Service. Used to send text messages up to 160 characters in length via the GSM telephone network.

**SMTP** - Simple Mail Transfer Protocol. A common Internet mail protocol for sending messages.

**SSD** - Solid State Disk. Proprietary storage 'card' devices used to expand the capacity of the Series 3 range of palmtops.

**Symbian** - A joint venture between Psion, Nokia, Ericsson, Motorola and other major telecommunications/computing companies to develop the EPOC standard and its derivatives.

**System folder** - A hidden folder present on all EPOC devices and containing numerous system settings/configuration files and all installed add-on software. See 'Inside the System folder' in *Palmtop* issue 28 for more details

**System screen** - The equivalent of a PC 'desktop' on Psion/EPOC devices. Accessed from EPOC by pressing the 'System' silk-screen button.

**Toolbar** - The strip of software buttons present down one side of the screen within some EPOC applications.

**WAP** - Wireless Application Protocol. A system for delivery of Internet content to handheld devices.

**Zip** - A compressed file format used widely on PCs and commonly adopted on Psion/EPOC devices.

*For a more comprehensive list of article cross-references, see the Palmtop index, supplied on all Palmtop CDs, or freely downloadable from www.palmtop.co.uk .*

## UseNet Groups, etc.

*comp.sys.psion.announce*
*comp.sys.psion.misc*
*comp.sys.psion.comm*
*comp.sys.psion.apps*
*comp.sys.psion.programmer*
*comp.sys.psion.marketplace*
*comp.sys.psion.reviews*

These newsgroups are the unmoderated discussion groups on the Internet. It's easiest to access them via a desktop machine using Microsoft or Netscape web browsers (choose 'Read newsgroups' or similar on their menu), but there's now also a dedicated EPOC newsreader, RMRNews, which you can download from *www.rmrsoft.com* .

There are also digests, with daily messages sent by email. Subscribe to the Series 5 version at *www.pinkworks.com/pda/s5list.html* .

Linux users can find a Linux Psion mailing list at *linux-psion@geekstuff.co.uk* and more Psion-related information at *ftp://ftp.to.com/pub/psion* .

## Proprietary discussion forums

| | |
|---|---|
| **AOL - Psion Noticeboard** | Psion/General noticeboard - Keyword: Psion |
| **CiX Psion conference** | join psion<br>join cixed |

## Psion-related software

| | |
|---|---|
| **3-Lib shareware library** | *3lib.ukonline.co.uk* |
| **CiX** | 'join psion', then look in '/files' and '/s5_files' file lists |
| **CompuServe** | GO PSION |
| **EPOC Software** | *www.epocsoftware.com* |
| **Palmtop Software Directory** | *www.palmtop.co.uk/softsubp.htm* |
| **Plus, of course, the Palmtop CD** | See page 115. |

## Psion FAQ

The Series 3 and Series 5 Frequently Asked Questions documents contain useful information, facts, names, addresses and numbers:

*www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/8130/faq.htm*

## World Wide Web sites

### Information

| | |
|---|---|
| 3 For All | *freespace.virgin.net/ro.cutler* |
| 3-Lib | *3lib.ukonline.co.uk* |
| Armlink | *www.armlink.ndirect.co.uk* |
| Palmtop magazine | *www.palmtop.co.uk* |
| PocketInfo | *www.pocketinfo.org* |
| Psion | *www.psion.com* |
| Symbian | *www.symbian.com* |

### News

| | |
|---|---|
| PDA News | *news.tucows.com/pdanews* |
| EPOC News | *www.epocnews.com* |
| EPOC Zone | *www.epoczone.com* |

### Software houses

| | |
|---|---|
| Atelier | *www.atelier.tm* |
| Beelogic | *www.beelogic.com* |
| FreEPOC | *www.freepoc.de* |
| Neuon | *www.neuon.com* |
| Palmtime | *www.shoresystems.net/palmtime* |
| Palmtop Software (formerly BV) | *www.palmtopsoftware.com* |
| PocketIQ | *www.pocketiq.com* |
| Purple Software | *www.purplesoft.com* |
| RMR Software | *www.rmrsoft.com* |

## Miscellaneous

| | |
|---|---|
| Directory of software authors | *3lib.ukonline.co.uk/authors.htm* |
| Epocalypse | *www.washuu.net* |
| FoxPop | *www.foxpop.ndirect.co.uk* |
| Go32 | *www.go32.com* |
| Online with your Psion | *homepages.ihug.co.nz/~jochen_Siegenthaler* |
| Psion medical | *dnausers.d-n-a.net/dnethWMo/psionmed.htm* |

## Search engines

| | |
|---|---|
| Googol | www.googol.net |
| Psion Websearches | *psion.websearches.net* |

# Problems with your Psion?

Here are some useful guidelines if you think you may have a hardware problem with your Psion palmtop:

## Things to check

Before even thinking of picking up the phone, make sure you've checked the following, if only to save your own embarrassment if it turns out to be something easy to solve:

- Are the main batteries OK? The Psion's own battery information option (from the System screen menu) will give you an indication of their health, otherwise you might want to invest in a cheap battery tester. If in doubt, replace them with brand new 'alkaline' batteries. Note that rechargeable batteries have a much shorter life and do not always give accurate readings with the Psion's own battery checker.
- If the screen appears to be faulty, it could be that the contrast just needs adjusting. If set to minimum you will have a blank screen, whereas maximum will give you an all-black screen. To adjust the contrast on a Series 3, hold down [Psion]+[.], on the Series 5, it's [Fn]+[.]
- Is the screen calibration OK? (Series 5 only). Go into 'Control panel | Screen' and recalibrate it.
- Have you tried resetting the Psion? If it's still possible to backup the unit, do so again unless you know you have a very recent backup. Then try a 'soft' reset. If that doesn't sort things out, try a 'hard' reset (see the manual for details on how to do this). If neither work, it's always worth unhooking all cables, removing all the batteries (AAs and backup cell) and any CompactFlash card in the CF bay, leaving for 30 minutes. Put the batteries back in and try again, restoring your data if the Psion comes back to life.

## Checks complete, but the fault is still there?

If all the above advice fails to help, it's best to contact the experts. If outside the UK, you'll have to contact your local distributors for support options. You can find a list of worldwide service agents at *www.psion.com/international*. If within the UK, read on...

## Machine repairs

If your machine has developed a hardware fault, you may find that your supplier (particularly if a High Street store) may have an arrangement for replacing your faulty machine. However, most people get their units repaired either by Psion themselves or by POS Ltd. If your Psion is still covered by the 12 month warranty, you should definitely contact Psion. If it is older than a year then you have a choice, although prices are generally similar between the two.

## Repairs by Psion

The Psion repair centre can be contacted by telephone on 0181 575 9919, or by email at

*uk-repair@psion.com*

If in the UK send the broken palmtop by Registered post or by courier, to:

Psion UK Repair Centre
Unit 6 Derby Road
Metropolitan Centre
Greenford
Middlesex
UB6 8UJ

Psion do not guarantee to save data that may be on your machine, so it is important to backup your data first if at all possible. You should remove the batteries (if your data is safe), stylus and SSDs/CFs. Package the machine securely, and enclose a covering letter describing the fault and supplying a daytime phone number and delivery address.

Remember to keep a note of your machine's serial number, as you may need to quote this if contacting Psion.

- On a Series 3 Classic, this is on the bottom of the machine on a sticker surrounding the speaker, beginning with the letters 'EBA'.
- On a Series 3a the number is on a transparent label inside the 'A' drive compartment, beginning 'FBA', 'FBB', etc.
- On a 3c it is in the same place as the 3a, but on a silver sticker with a barcode on it: beginning with 'JBB', 'JBC', etc.
- On a 3mx it is in the same place as the 3a, but on a silver sticker with a barcode on it: beginning with 'LB', etc.
- A Siena has its serial number underneath the front AAA battery, beginning 'HBB' or 'HBC'.
- The Series 5 has its serial number on a sticker with a barcode either inside the compartment with the backup battery or in the 'D' drive compartment, beginning with 'KA00', 'KB00', etc.

Attach some proof of purchase if the repair is a warranty job. Psion will acknowledge receipt of the palmtop into their system, billing you if the repair is chargeable, and will usually return the fixed unit within about a week, by courier.

## Technical support

If you have a software or operational problem, you may wish to contact Psion's Technical Support department—see our news item on page 4 for current rates. If you have access to the Internet, then you will find the answer to many common questions and problems at *www.psion.com/support* .

## Repairs by POS Ltd

POS Ltd. offer a similar postal service (contact them for details), plus 'while you wait' repairs at their high street shop at 143 Streatham High Road, London SW16 6EG. Providing you've booked an appointment, repairs can generally be done on the spot in 1-2 hours.

Telephone POS Ltd. on 0181 677 9246

# Psion/EPOC models at a glance

| Maker | Model | Year launched | Original price (inc VAT) | Memory | Operating system |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Psion | Organiser I | 1984 | £99 | 2K | Psion |
| Psion | Organiser II CM | 1986 | £99 | 8K | Psion |
| Psion | Organiser II XP | 1986 | £139 | 16K/32K | Psion |
| Psion | Organiser II LZ | 1988 | £149/189 | 32K/64K | Psion |
| Psion | MC200 | 1989 | £495 | 128K | SIBO |
| Psion | MC400/Word | 1989 | £695 | 256K | SIBO |
| Psion | MC600 | 1989 | £1295 | 768K | DOS 3.2 |
| Psion | Series 3 | 1991 | £199/£249 | 128K/256K | SIBO |
| Psion | Series 3a | 1993 | £279/£329 | 256K/512K | SIBO |
| Psion | Series 3a | 1995 | £339/£399 | 1MB/2MB | SIBO |
| Psion | Workabout | 1995 | Various | Various | SIBO and custom |
| Psion | Series 3c | 1996 | £339/£399 | 1MB/2MB | SIBO |
| Psion | Siena | 1996 | £169/£229 | 512K/1MB | SIBO |
| Psion | Series 5 | 1997 | £439/£499 | 4MB/8MB | EPOC |
| Geofox | Geofox One | 1997 | £385/£599 | 4MB/16MB | EPOC |
| Psion | Series 3mx | 1998 | £269 | 2MB | SIBO |
| Psion | Workabout mx | 1998 | Various | Various | SIBO and custom |
| Psion | Series 5mx | 1999 | £429 | 16MB | EPOC |
| Ericsson | MC218 | 1999 | £479 | 16MB | EPOC |
| Oregon Scientific | Osaris | 1999 | £219/£279 | 4MB/8MB | EPOC |
| Psion | Series 7 | 1999 | £699 | 16MB | EPOC |
| Psion Enterprise | netBook | 1999 | £995 | 32MB | EPOC |
| Psion | Revo | 1999 | £299 | 8MB | EPOC |

| Processor type/speed | Screen | Expansion options | Infra-red |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 16-character single line | 2 'datapak' slots | No |
| HD6303X/0.92Mhz | 16-character, 2 line | 2 'datapak' slots | No |
| HD6303X/0.92Mhz | 16-character, 2 line | 2 'datapak' slots | No |
| HD6303X/0.92Mhz | 20-character, 4 line | 2 'datapak' slots | No |
| 80C86/7.68Mhz | 640 x 200 | 4 SSD slots, one with upgradable OS | No |
| 80C86/7.68Mhz | 640 x 400 | 4 SSD slots, one with upgradable OS | No |
| 80C86/7.68Mhz | 640 x 200 | 1MB 'internal' disk, OS in flash RAM | No |
| NEC V30/3.84Mhz | 240 x 80 | 2 SSD slots | No |
| NEC V30H/7.68Mhz | 480 x 160 | 2 SSD slots | No |
| NEC V30H/7.68Mhz | 480 x 160 | 2 SSD slots | No |
| NEC V30H/7.68Mhz | 240 x 100 | 2 internal SSD slots | No |
| NEC V30H/7.68Mhz | 480 x 160 (later backlit) | 2 SSD slots | Yes |
| NEC V30H/7.68Mhz | 240 x 160 | External (optional) SSD drive | Yes |
| ARM 710/18.43Mhz | 640 x 240, backlit, touch sensitive | CompactFlash slot | Yes |
| ARM 710/18.43Mhz | 640 x 320, backlit | PC-Card slot | Yes |
| NEC V30MX/27.68Mhz | 480 x 160, backlit | 2 SSD slots | Yes |
| NEC V30MX/27.68Mhz | 240 x 100 | 2 internal SSD slots | Yes |
| ARM 710T/36.86Mhz | 640 x 240, backlit, touch sensitive | CompactFlash slot | Yes |
| ARM 710T/36.86Mhz | 640 x 240, backlit, touch sensitive | CompactFlash slot | Yes |
| CL-PS7111/18.43Mhz | 320 x 200, backlit, touch sensitive | CompactFlash slot | Yes |
| StrongArm SA-1100 /130Mhz | 640 x 480 colour, backlit, touch sensitive | CompactFlash and PC-Card slots | Yes |
| StrongArm SA-1100 /190Mhz | 640 x 480 colour, backlit, touch sensitive | CompactFlash and PC-Card slots | Yes |
| ARM 710T/36.86Mhz | 480 x 160, touch sensitive | None | Yes |

# Using the Palmtop CD-ROM

- **Windows** users who receive the CD should double-click on the file 'Start.htm'. On most PCs the web browser will leap into life and display the CD interface. If nothing happens, or if Windows asks how the file should be displayed, cancel the operation and install a 'web browser' application such as Microsoft Internet Explorer or Netscape (these can be found on almost all PC magazine cover CDs). After installation, try double-clicking on 'Start.htm' again.

  Please note that your operating system may set all files retrieved from the CD to 'Read-only'. This shouldn't cause a problem for 99% of applications, but you may have to manually change file properties (e.g. use [Control]+[P] on the Series 5 itself) if you have problems with running or removing software.

  Those who install a new web browser should note that it often comes with its default start page set to the maker's web site, meaning that it tries to go online. Just go into its 'View|Options' dialog (or similar) and set the start page to a file local to your computer (e.g. the *Palmtop* CD Start.htm file).

- **Macintosh** users should simply drag the 'start.htm' file onto their web browser, where it will load the interface just as on a PC. Please note that the Psion screen saver, demos and Emulators are all designed to run on PCs, so they will not work directly on your Mac. The latest CDs also come with a Mac-specific start page.

- **DOS** and **Amiga** owners may be restricted in what they can view on the CD, but will still be able to browse the 3-Lib library section and copy off the software as needed.

- Users of **RISC OS** machines have had a few problems with the 'Joliet' format used on the Palmtop CD-ROM. Fortunately that has now been resolved, and users of those machines can now access all of the web sites on the CD without getting error messages (although they obviously won't be able to run any of the applications). All that's needed is a copy of Warm Silence Software's CDROMFS. For more details, contact Warm Silence Software Ltd, PO Box 28, Woodstock, Oxfordshire, OX20 1XX. Tel: 0585 487642, Tel/Fax: 01608 737172 or see their web site at *www.wss.co.uk*.

  RISC OS users will also find that the copy of the ArmLink web site on the CD contains PsiFS, a free application they can use to transfer files between their palmtop and desktop machines.

- **Linux** users should mount the CD on their computer and open their web browser on the 'Start.htm' file. The Psion screen saver, demos and emulators are all designed to run on PCs, so they will not work directly under Linux.

# Palmtop

## CD Plus

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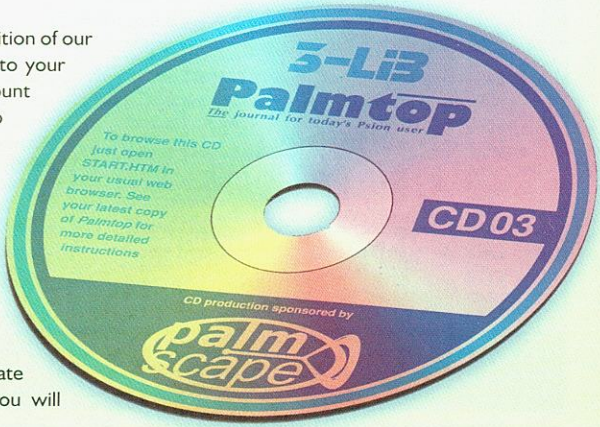
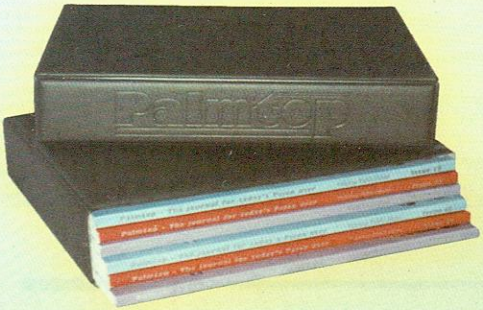

5-Lib
Palmtop
The journal for today's Psion user
To browse this CD just open START.HTM in your usual web browser. See your latest copy of Palmtop for more detailed instructions
CD03
CD production sponsored by
palm scape

- The CD is re-pressed and updated APPROXIMATELY every two months, but this will vary. We have a standard number of CDs pressed every time, and update it every time we run out. In any case you will receive SIX CDs for your money.

- Note that the majority of the content does not change from disk to disk. As an example, CD06 had about 100 new and updated programs that were not on CD05, from a total of over 2000.

Alternatively, you can always buy single copies of the latest Palmtop CD for £10 each (including worldwide postage). See our contact details on page 1, or order direct from our web site, on *www.palmtop.co.uk*

# Keep 'em SMART!

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This service is not available to non-subscribers, nor to Psion dealers. We bear no liability for items bought or sold from this page.

## For Sale

Series 5mx - £345, MacConnect - £25, 3Com 56k v.90 fax modem - £45, null modem adaptor for 5mx - £10.

Contact: Mike on 07974 916167

16MB Geofox One, mains adaptor, parallel printer cable and Psion Dacom Gold Card PC card modem - £150.

Contact: Simon Bonney on 01235 525383 (evenings), or email simon@bonneys.freeserve.co.uk

Series 3mx (2MB) - £140, Mulberry leather case - £20, PsiWin (2.3) - £30, Widget Finance pack - £8, 2MB flash - £40, chrome desk stand - £15, Quick reference guide - £5, Psion Money - £8, or £250 for the lot.

Contact: David McCorquodale on 07831 424848 or 01825 790270 or email david.mccorquodale@srg.caa.co.uk

Series 5mx (16MB) with PsiWin 2.3, cable and 'gold' aluminium stylus - £250.

Email andrew@awest.demon.co.uk

Series 5 (8MB) with PsiWin 2 - £190 plus postage.

Contact: Sue on 07860 810277 or email sue.davis@bt.com

Series 5 (8MB) with 2 year extended warranty, case, PsiWin and printer leads, power supply, Checkdisk utility, 'Psion 5 in easy steps' book - £220.

Contact: Richard Ward on 01606 835976 or email richardward@rth-tech.fsbusiness.co.uk

Series 5 (8MB/ROM v1.01), 10MB Sandisk CF and parallel printer cable - £260, or will split.

Contact: Paul Musson on 01623 810159 after 6pm or 07931 336517

Series 5 (8MB) with Palmtop BV Expense Manager - £175.

Contact: Reid at *reidhutchison@psion.net*

Series 3mx - £130, Cyclone floppy drive - £70, EnRoute (SSD) - £35, Paint and Compose (SSD) - £20, Scrabble (SSD) - £20, Chess (SSD) - £20, Toolkit 2 (SSD) - £15, Games 3a (SSD) - £10, Games Deluxe (SSD) - £10, Chomper (floppy) - £5, Nicholson London Guide (floppy) - £5. Alternatively, £270 for everything.

Contact: Ian Astle on 0115 9139109.

## Wanted

Issue 4 of Palmtop magazine, to complete my collection!

Contact: Keith Mathewson on 0208 892 8552, or email keith.mathewson@which.net

## Wanted

Series 3c or 3mx, also Canon BJ10sx printer.

Contact: Barry on 0794 1210722

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**Email: matt@psionex.co.uk**
**Web: www.psionex.co.uk**

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| HARDWARE | | We Buy | We Sell |
|---|---|---|---|
| Siena | 512K | £30 | £70 |
| | 1MB | £35 | £80 |
| Series 3a | 512K | £35 | £90 |
| | 2MB | £45 | £120 |
| Series 3c | 1MB | £45 | £120 |
| | 2MB | £50 | £130 |
| Series 3mx | 2MB | £70 | £160 |
| Revo | 8MB | £130 | £235 |
| Series 5 | 8MB | £110 | £220 |
| | 5mx | £220 | £340 |

| COMMS | | We Buy | We Sell |
|---|---|---|---|
| Serial Cable | 3a | £15 | £35 |
| PsiWin+cables | 3a (v1.0) | £15 | £45 |
| | mx/5 (v2.2) | £10 | £35 |
| Printer link | 3a | £1 | £7 |
| | 3c/mx/S5 | £10 | £25 |
| 3Fax | 3a | £20 | £50 |
| Travel Modem | 3a/mx/S5 | £30 | £75 |
| PC card modem ad. | 3a/mx/S5 | £20 | £50 |
| Dacom Gold Card 14k | 3a/mx/S5 | £15 | £50 |
| Dacom Gold Card 56k | 3a/mx/S5 | £55 | £135 |

| MISC | | We Buy | We Sell |
|---|---|---|---|
| AC adaptor | 3a/3c | £1 | £10 |
| Leather case | | £2-5 | £5-20 |
| Programming manual | | £1 | £6 |
| Cyclone External Floppy (3a) | | £20 | £50 |

| MEMORY | | We Buy | We Sell |
|---|---|---|---|
| Flash SSD | 512K | £8 | £30 |
| | 1MB | £15 | £45 |
| | 2MB | £25 | £65 |
| Ram SSD | 512K | £15 | £45 |
| | 1MB | £25 | £65 |
| CFlash Disk (S5) | 4MB | £5 | £20 |
| | 12MB | £10 | £35 |
| | 32MB | £25 | £60 |

| SOFTWARE - 3 Series | | We Buy | We Sell |
|---|---|---|---|
| Autoroute Express | SSD | £3 | £15 |
| Berlitz Int/Phrase | SSD | £3 | £15 |
| Games 1/2/3a | SSD | £2 | £10 |
| Money | SSD | £2 | £15 |
| PsiFax | SSD | £5 | £25 |
| PsiMail Internet | SSD | £10 | £35 |

| SOFTWARE - 5 Series | | We Buy | We Sell |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5Pack | Disk | £7 | £20 |
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| Collins Dictionary | CD | £10 | £30 |
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| Route Planner | CD | £10 | £30 |
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|---|---|
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| PSIOlogic | www.psiologic.com<br>+49 6051 9655 0 |
| New World Technologies | www.nwt.com<br>+1 800 886 4967 (USA) |

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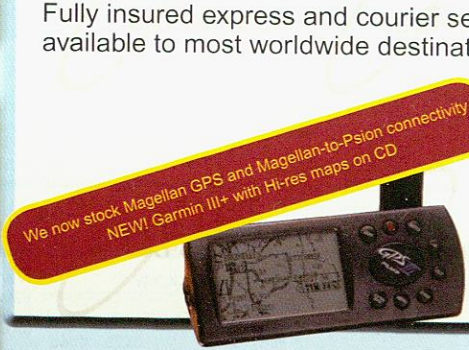


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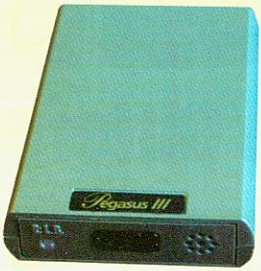

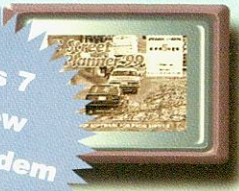

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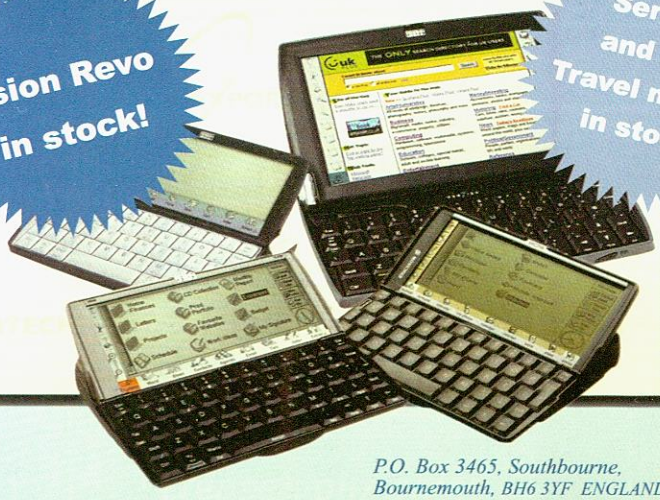

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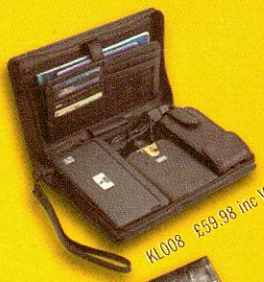

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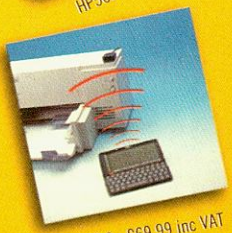

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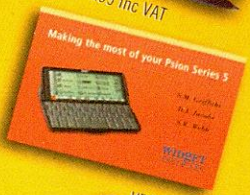


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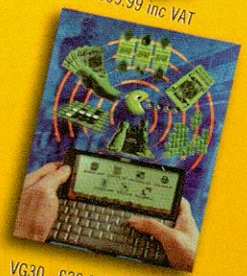

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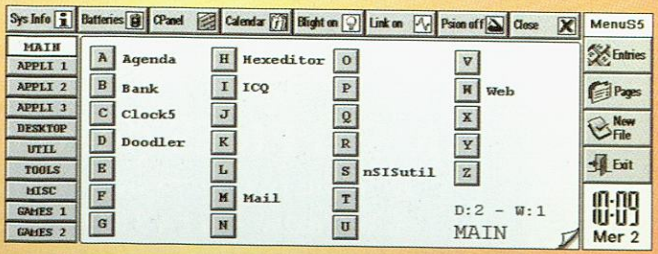


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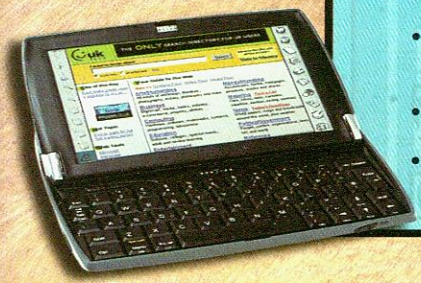

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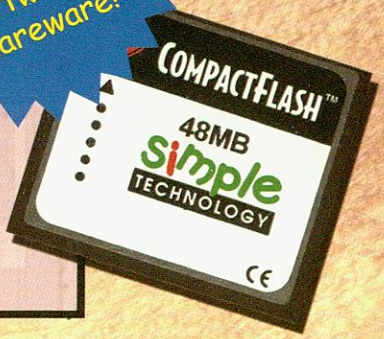


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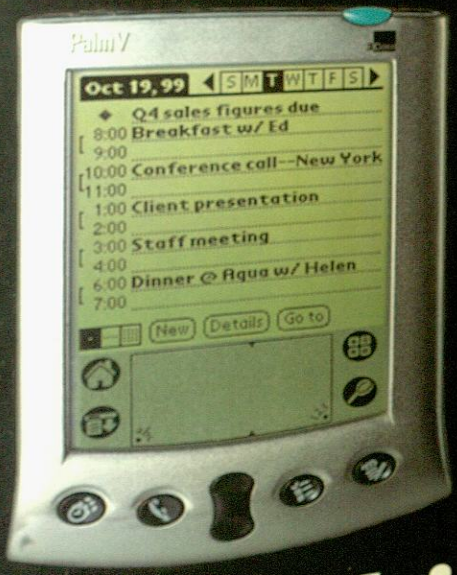


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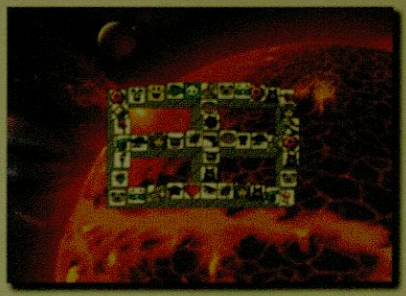

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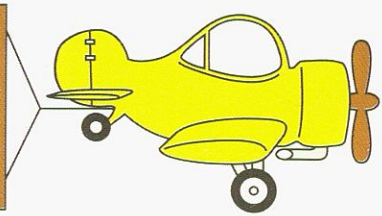

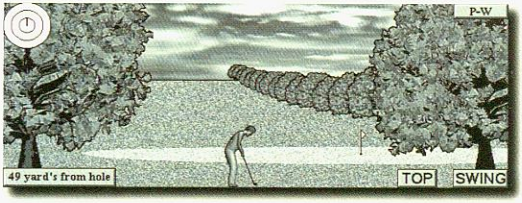


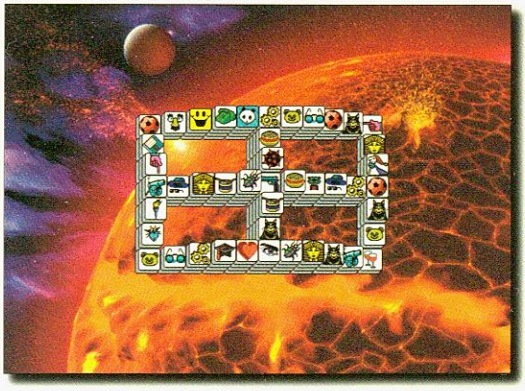

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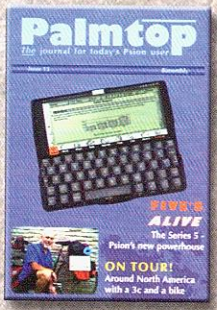
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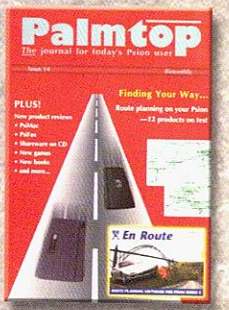

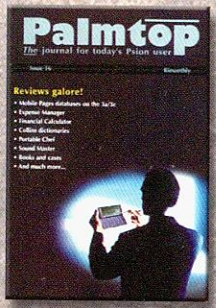


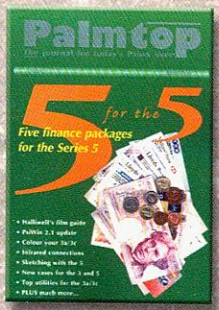

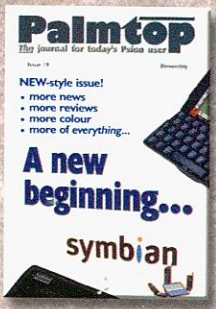

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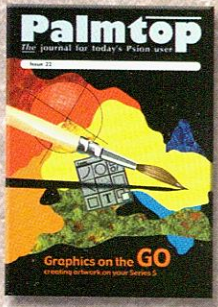


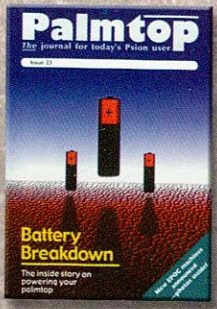


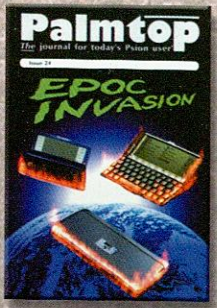


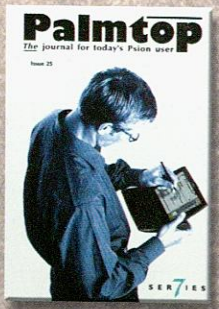

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Issue 16 - Portable Chef, Expense Manager, invoicing with your Psion, outlining, training courses...
Issue 17 - using Sketch, a roundup of EPOC finance packages, connecting to the Internet...
Issue 18 - Navigator, Essential Disk Utilities, managing a collection with Data, objects, memory...
Issue 19 - Series 5 PC emulator, connecting to the Internet, objects, working with Data...
Issue 20 - faxing with your Psion, the history of Psion, Internet connectivity, Series 3mx review...
Issue 21 - Powerbase, Plan5, Flight Manager, Workabout mx, connecting to a mobile phone...
Issue 22 - Notepad Deluxe, SimCity, Halliwell's, infrared, graphics software roundup, Agenda...
Issue 23 - Palm-Tec cases, printing from your Psion, ebooks for the Psion, battery roundup...
Issue 24 - Series 5mx review, inside CompactFlash, Ericsson MC218, Oregon Osaris, used Psions...
Issue 25 - Series 7, PsiWin 2.3, Pegasus II modem, synchronizing with a PC, Macro5, Java...
Issue 26 - Revo, Route Planner, Palmtop GPS, Collins Dictionary, backups, Mac connectivity...
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# Next issue...

## Planned for issue 29:

- An advance preview of Quartz, one of the next generation of EPOC communicators
- Working with Word—a major new series for beginners
- Software and techniques to maximise your productivity with Word on all EPOC palmtops
- How to get the most from your Revo—an in-depth look at maximising resources, plugging the gaps in the Revo software and a brief look at hardware add-ons
- EPOC security—how safe is your data?
- Creating and maintaining a web site from your palmtop
- WAP—we look at what it is and whether it's going to be significant for EPOC users
- Email in depth—the final part of the series, looking at attachments, automation and email etiquette
- Working for a living: the Scientist
- Getting along with ExtraBars
- Connecting your Psion to an Atari computer
- Hot tips for top EPOC games

*Plus all our regular features!*

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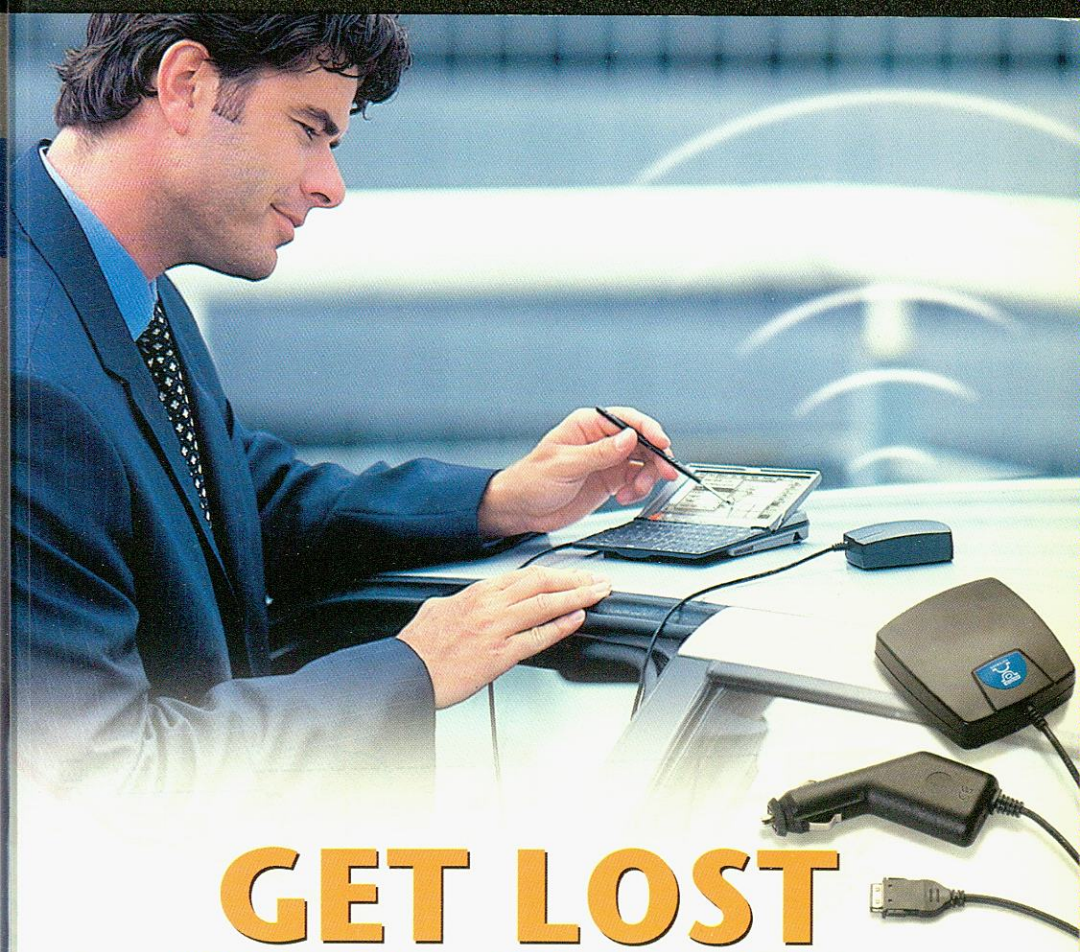
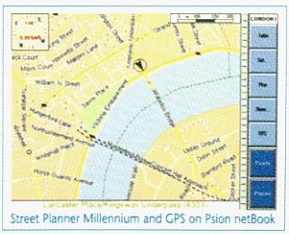


# GET LOST

## Or use NEW Street Planner Millennium and a Palmtop GPS



Street Planner Millennium and GPS on Psion netBook

Street Planner Millennium can plan perfect routes within a town or city. You will be guided to your destination in an instant. Whether you are in a car or walking, Street Planner Millennium will take into account one way systems or even guide you via alleys. Connect up to a Palmtop GPS (which is powered by a car's cigarette lighter) to view exactly where you are on the map and reveal real time instructions. This is especially reassuring as well as time effective when in a large or unknown town.

***NEW for Street Planner Millennium:***

- REVO compatible
- Optimised for use with Palmtop GPS
- New background information eg. Water, urban areas or forest
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- Quick Zoom function... plus many more improved functions

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## PalmTop Software: Smart applications for people on the move

GPS & Street Planner Millennium are compatible with the Psion Series 5, 5mx, Series 7, netBook and the Ericsson MC218. • Email: info@palmtopsoftware.com • Website: www.palmtopsoftware.com

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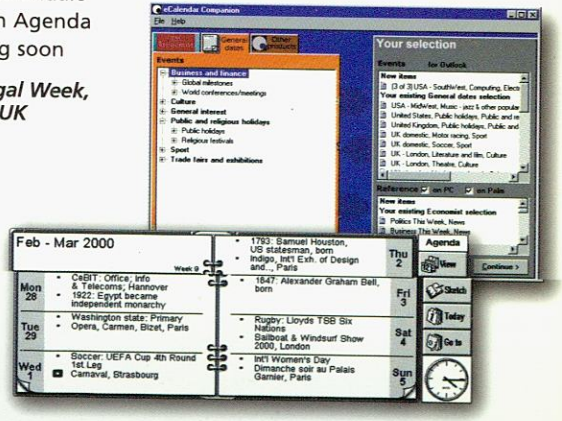


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